

THE CROPPY

A TALE OF 1798.

BY

THE AUTHORS OF
"THE O'HARA TALES," "THE NOWLANS,"
AND "THE BOYNE WATER."

The uncivil kerns of Ireland are in arms.

SECOND PART OF KING HENRY VI

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ERRATA.

Page

83 *line 9, for Kane, read Kane's.*

75 — 14, *for torturer's, read torturers.*

148 — 2, *for yielding, read trembling.*

266 — 10, *for that read fair.*

261 — 19, *for pulled read pull.*

265 *lines 7 and 8, supply a comma after however, and delete the comma after dangerous.*

315 *line 19, for him, read you*



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CHAPTER I.

WHILE some of the meaner of the enlarged captives flung up their hats and mingled with their liberators, and while others of more consideration were hailed with frantic greetings, and clamorously appointed to the dignity of leaders, Sir William, after the first effusion of his own wild joy, seemed to become equally insensible to the yells that still pealed around him, and to the furious action by which, exuberant at all times as is the impassioned gesticulation of the Irish peasant, the victors manifested their sense of continued success.

Having crossed the threshold of his prison, he stood aside, his back leaning against its wall,

a moody and uninterested man amidst the exultation of thousands, and solely self-occupied in endeavouring to shape out some course by which ~~his~~ ^{his} enfranchisement might be made serviceable to his private views. ^{Hasty} accounts, interchanged between his late fellow-prisoners and their liberators, of yesterday's proceedings; rapid allusions to the state of the town, to the sudden flight of its garrison, and some of its inhabitants, towards Ross, and of others towards the ships in the harbour; all this was lost upon his ear. One only sentence, uttered by a friendly citizen, raised his attention. The man spoke of Sir Thomas Hartley's death, and went on to mention that, in the course of the day, his carriage had arrived in Wexford, strongly guarded by a body of yeomen, and that, at the door of a particular house, a lady, closely veiled and cloaked, had descended from it. Sir William sprang to the speaker, seized his arm, pulled him to himself, learned the name of the proprietor of the house spoken of, and then, no longer inactive, he pushed through the throng, one sole object engaging his mind.

To the wild confusion around he still remained indifferent. If, during his furious progress through the obstructed streets, a door was battered in, and a faint shriek succeeded to the

crash, he heard or regarded it not. Nay, when a miserable fugitive, winged by the fear of a shocking death, had gained some advance of his pursuers, flung himself at Sir William's feet, and with upturned features of supplicating despair, and burning, starting eyes, piteously claimed his protection—he but stopped to unloose from his knees the wretch's grasping hands—to hurl him to his executioners, muttering—"Talbot, were it you?"—and then he pursued his way.

But a more serious incident, in which, merely to break down impediments to his own business, he was obliged to bear a part, caused farther interruption to his career.

The lusurgents had stipulated that life and property should be spared, provided the arms, ammunition, and accoutrements of the garrison, were left behind. But the garrison abandoned the town—so precipitately as, in many instances, to abandon, at the same time, their wives and children—before even the return, from the besiegers, of their own envoys; and consequently they did not comply with terms which they would not tarry to learn. The invading throng, disappointed of the expected spoils, which, above all others, they valued, pronounced, as

impetuously as their foes had fled before them, that faith was broken towards the Wexford army of liberty ; and the black passions of the multitude, that in a degree had been tamed by the pride of conscious predominance, and by exhortations from the leaders to uphold, in its dignity, the high character of conquerors, began, like the first tossing of the waters beneath the scourge of the tempest, to lash each other with a fury which threatened fearful retaliation.

A street, through which Sir William must necessarily pass, was densely blocked up by the greater number of the wrathful concourse ; and, as he joined their outskirts, they had just evinced omens of this dangerous mood, when three or four leaders, headed by Father General Rourke, springing into laudable energy, called on him to assist in allaying the rising gust, that they well knew, if once fully let loose, it would be as difficult to conciliate as the matured violence of the ocean-rage, to which we have likened its symptoms.

Chiefly for the purpose of scattering the throng, through whose wedged array he could not hope to penetrate, Sir William answered the claim made upon him, and followed Rourke into the midst of the howling people, exerting

himself, as all the other leaders did, to produce the much-desired result ; but by none of their commanders were the multitude so effectually swayed as by the clerical captain, as, with the accost of rude, authoritative intrepidity, he rode boldly amongst them—sparing, when advice and explanation failed, neither spiritual anathema, nor more substantial blows ; all quailed beneath his voice or arm : and Wexford, on the point of destruction, was saved. Afterwards, indeed, some houses, deserted, closed up, and therefore showing a face of inhospitality, were broken open and pillaged ; and also some belonging to persons who had been marked down as notorious enemies to the Insurgent cause. A few lives were sacrificed too to individual hate or ferocity, which nothing could control ; but, although upon every side reigned utter turbulence, injury to property or life was partial, and by no means ensued to the extent that might be feared from a host of revengeful men, masters over all, and armed with the full power to do mischief. And here, let us add a fact, which, in the estimation of every candid inquirer into human nature, must throw a redeeming ray of grace around the blackest crimes perpetrated in hasty vengeance by the Irish Insurgents of 1798. During their moments of

maddest licentiousness, neither in the town or county of Wexford, nor in any other town or county over which insurrection spread its blaze, occasionally destroying as it listed, was female honour once outraged ; or, excepting a single peculiar and fearful instance, female blood shed !

But, after Sir William's escape through the dispersing throng, the house to which he forced his way, proved to be one of those marked out for destruction, as belonging to a yeoman captain, who had been distinguished for "activity," as it was called, "previous to the rising." And, to add to his fears at this intelligence, he farther learned, ere he could scramble past the threshold, that, surely anticipating the fate which awaited him, its proprietor, like the innkeeper at Enniscorthy, had fled from Wexford before the arrival of the Insurgents, and left all the females of his family to the mercy of those he most dreaded.

"An' they 're before you, in the house, if you want 'em, Ginerel," added his informant.

Through an astounding jumble of crash and vociferation in the lower part of the house, Sir William sprang up-stairs, and burst his way into the principal room. Here was but a continuation of the scene he had escaped from

below. Windows were shattered, and furniture was dashed to pieces and flung out through them into the street; and mingled with the shout of fury came the shout of merriment: the wildest act of destruction, in accordance with the hidden character of the Irish peasant, often producing the heartiest laugh:—hidden we have called that character, and it is so;—its minor traits, indeed, such as appear, or are put forward, in every-day intercourse, any one may catch; but owing to a long habit of abstraction, or rather banishment from all interchange of social thought or feeling with those ranking above him, the real moral elements that form every kind of character—the springings of the heart, and the mental combinations, no matter how rude, which end in impulse—those secrets of his inner heart, the Irish peasant keeps concealed to the present hour, as well from the oppressors he hates, as from the friends who, if they knew him better, could better serve him.

Sir William's eye lighted on a man he had before seen in almost a similar situation. It was no other than the individual who had sold him his own miniature and his bride's gloves and wedding-ring, in the inn at Enniscorthy; and still

this person seemed to be the presiding genius of discovery in the work of pillage. With a heavy hammer he battered at a chest of drawers; and ere, one by one, he tossed out the contents of each drawer to his crowding followers, he might be observed to run his own hand, with much stealthy dexterity, through the valuable articles, and sometimes to steal it, unseen, to his pocket.

“Sparables for the cratures o’ women, boys!” he said, emptying a drawer-full of elegant finery upon the floor; there was a laughing strife for shares of the prize, and then the drawer was shivered to pieces, and cast into the street.

“An’ here—the poor Capt’n makes shirts for Croppies, boys,” flinging down another, stuffed with the useful matters he had mentioned.

Sir William darted upon him, and clutched him tight.

“Asy, now, asy, neighbour!” cried the fellow.

“How have you disposed of the ladies of this house, rascal?”

“Pike the life out o’ the Orangeman!” was the cry around, as the crowd deemed they saw their temporary leader violently assaulted by an enemy.

“ I ’m not Orange, friends—I fought for you at Enniscorthy,” said Sir William.

“ Hould off—hould off!—his honour spakes the truth,” expostulated the man. “ Many ’s the one I hard say id—an’ I know him to-day though I didn’t know him yestherday.”

The appeal produced peace, and the speaker resumed, quietly turning to his captor, who still held him secure—“ An’ is id about the poor ladies your honour is axin?”

“ Yes, yes! Where are they?—Safe—safe—or I will shoot you where you stand!”

“ Oh, then, if that ’s all, safe enough they are;—only they were runnin’ here an’ there; an’ just to keep ’em out o’ harum, I ’ve put ’em snug an’ cozy into one crib together.”

“ What do you mean, fellow?—Explain, this instant!”

“ Asy, now, your honour; don’t be too frap-tious, all out, wid a body;—you were free enough in Enniscorthy, wid your mokuses, only for a lady’s glove, an’ a lady’s ring; an’ will you give nothin’ at all to the boy that maybe ’ill help you to the weeny hand, an’ the weeny finger, that wears the both?”

Sir William almost emptied his purse into the horny palm of the mercenary knight,—add-

ing, that if he found himself trifled with, he would take signal vengeance.

“ Oh, never fear; we’ll gi’ you pick an’ choose of all in the house, at laste: come, your honour, I’ll bring you to the very dour o’ the cage.”

“ Lead on, Sir, I’ll follow you—ay, to the world’s end, if you deceive me.”

“ Well, your honour, sure it’ll only be ketch him who can, betuxt us.”

But Sir Williani’s doubts were unnecessary: his guide had stated but the facts. Having ascertained, with yells of baffled revenge, the timely flight of the yeoman captain, the Insurgents, only venting their rage upon his property, had driven the ladies of the house into a garret room, and while the work of plunder and devastation went on below, there locked them in, unmolested at their hands, save by the party execrations which they would have lavished upon Saint Bridget, or any other female saint in the calendar, if she or any one of them were an Orangewoman.

The man unlocked and flung the door open, and with a giggling laugh hastily returned to a scene of more interest. Sir William saw four females in the room, who, at his appear-

ance, started from trembling terror into horrid despair: his eye scanned the group; one seemed the lady of the house; two others, her daughters; and the fourth was not his wife, but, strange enough to relate, Miss Alicia Hartley.

The pallid faces, the clasped hands, the humbled postures, and the beseeching eyes of the three first-mentioned ladies, conveyed no meaning to Sir William Judkin. His wife did not appear—he comprehended nothing else.

As he stood motionless at the door, Miss Alicia, seated on the floor, at one side, and supporting her back against the wall, seemingly in an exhausted state, slowly recognized him and pronounced his name. He sprang to her.

“Where is our Eliza, dear madam?—where is she?” growing impatient of the old lady’s tearful silence, as he knelt before her.

“Oh, Sir William!” answered the feeble Miss Alicia, “I wish I could inform you!”

“And you cannot, madam!”

“Alas! no;—if I could—kneeling, as you do, before me, so like one now no more——”

“Absurd, madam!—surely this at least you can answer—where did you part from her?—when?”

“I have not seen my poor child since about ten o’clock yester evening.”

"Eternal powers!" Sir William sprang to his feet. "How?—where?—in what manner were you separated?—and could you leave her side, Miss Alicia Hartley? could you leave her unprotected?—you must account with me, madam, why you have done this!"—his eyes turned in rage even upon the helpless object stretched beneath them.

"Heaven can witness," answered the trembling old lady, in bitter anguish, "I am sufficiently wretched, without the additional misery of your anger, Sir William: it is not necessary, indeed it is not, to overwhelm me. Grant me fortitude, O my God! to bear my sufferings as a Christian should!"

"But your answer, madam!"

"I will, I will, Sir William—do not look so fiercely on me, and I will answer you; as well, at least, as my shattered and distracted recollection enables me:—and oh! dismal, bleak, and pitiful, are now my recollections of all the past. Oh, my poor brother!—oh, Thomas, Thomas!—The Lord strengthen me! the Lord pity me!" and she relapsed into a feeble paroxysm of weeping, from which Sir William at last refrained to rouse her.

But finally, in broken words, half of sorrow-

ful ejaculation, and of continued prayers to Heaven for the strength she was but too conscious of not possessing, Miss Alicia began to recount the occurrences of the previous night.

Some time after she and her niece arrived in Enniscorthy, they were weeping together, and starting at every sound, in expectation of the arrival of a messenger dispatched to gather tidings of the proceedings at the castle, when a tall woman entered the apartment.

“A tall woman, madam!—did you remark her features?”

“No; they were either hidden from me, or else my dim eyes could not observe them at the distance at which she stood.”

“Well, madam?”

“This unannounced visitant requested a private interview with Miss Hartley, who seemed willing to grant it, and I was excluded from their conference. They spoke together a considerable time. At her departure I found our Eliza much agitated by some new feelings; she told me that the woman had been the bearer of a letter from her father.”

“From her father, Miss Alicia?”

“Alas! yes;—and though, at the moment,

this allayed my doubts and fears, I have since but too truly become aware that the alleged letter must have been a forgery; for scarce did I arrive in this house, when the people informed me that, at the time it was said to have been written, my poor brother was—was not alive to write it.”

Sir William underwent the test of a fresh fit of weeping.

“The woman also pretended to bear to my dear child a letter from you, Sir William.”

“Great powers, madam!”

“Though I need not ask you if this, too, was not a base forgery.”

“I certainly did send her a note, madam, but as certainly not by such a messenger; the keeper of Emmiscorthy prison promised, for a bribe, to forward it.”

“Well, this note came to our Eliza’s hand—if, indeed, it was the same you sent—”

“Mine was written with a pencil.”

“And so was this, for I read it.”

The old lady continued to say that the contents of the other letter were withheld from her by Eliza; that, some time after, overcome by grief and feebleness, she sank into a slumber,

upon awaking from which, her niece did not appear, nor had Miss Alicia since heard of her.

With respect to her own appearance in Wexford, she proceeded to say, that, after a night spent in vain inquiries and laments, the person to whom she ascribed all her misfortunes abruptly presented himself before her ; that, not able to speak her fear or horror of him, she fainted away ; that, regaining her senses, she found herself in the family carriage, rapidly driven along, she knew not whither, and closely guarded by yeomen ; that, entering Wexford, the vehicle stopped at the door of the house in which she at present was ; that the gentleman and lady of the house received her kindly, as a charge they had expected ; that, immediately on her arrival amongst them, she had been compelled to take to her bed ; whence, an hour ago, the invasion of the cruel rebels rendered her uprise a matter of necessity.

No farther information could Sir William obtain from the shocked and enfeebled old lady ; but this, though not enough in one sense, was too much in another. If he had previously entertained any doubt as to the present position

of his bride, he now became at least certain that she must be sought only at the hands of Talbot.

Indifferent to Miss Alicia's feeble cries for protection, he rushed out of the house, into the still crowded and uproarious street; he became conscious of a confused stupor of brain, and his first wish was to shun the riot and the throngs around him, and escape for a moment to some silent spot, where, flinging himself on the earth, in the open, free air, his mind might grow cool enough to arm him with deliberate thought and purpose.

As yet, while he boldly pushed through all the obstruction in the crowded streets, he only felt a return, in increased force, of the impulse before felt, to seek out Talbot in the very face of peril and death, clutch him by the throat, demand his wife, and then—kill him, and tread upon him. Nor did this seem difficult to the feverish mind of the young Baronet. He would be more cunning and wary than he had before been. He would disguise his features; he would assume a yeoman's uniform—thus he might easily gain access to Talbot's haunts—and, once found—touched—he would drag him into some private place, and then—he actually

bounded at his own fancied picture of the encounter.

Absorbed by the greedy longing for his revenge, he continued to hurry on, when some one caught him by the arm. Fiercely turning to resent the interruption, he recognized Father Rourke. The face of the reverend warrior, except where perspiration had forced a distinct way, was fearfully blotched and stained; his lips were parched; his voice sounded hoarse and exhausted, and altogether he appeared as a man who had undergone extreme toil, but yet whose constitution would not yield to toil of the severest kind.

“Whither so fast, my young soldier?”

“You know already, Sir!—to seek out a traitor-villain, Talbot! to seek and find him, if he be on the surface of the earth!”—and it seemed, as if by this desperate expression of his purpose, or rather of his impulse, he had fixed himself in his wild resolve.

“You have not yet got back the poor little wife from him, then?”

Sir William grinned and stamped his reply.

“Well; suppose I can direct you where to meet him at least?”

“Is he in the town!—secured!”

“No; yet in the hands of those who will make him answer your questions: for, if my eye did not deceive me, I saw him, upon our way to Wexford, taken prisoner, at the head of a small number of his poor yeomen, and marched to our stationary camp on Vinegar Hill.”

“You are sure, Sir?”

“Not downright positive, so as to make oath of the thing; but the prisoner certainly was a yeoman officer, in the uniform of his corps, and Talbot it appeared to me.”

“Bless you, bless you, good friend! I will set off after him this moment.”

“Had you not better take some rest and refreshment, before you go?”

“Rest and refreshment! with this before me to do?—Where shall I find a horse, Father Rourke?”

“By the life, man, as I tould you before, I am General Rourke now.”

“Well—General Rourke—but can you assist me to a horse?”

“Why, yes, I think I can; or sure you may easily assist yourself: few stables in Wexford but are open to your pick and choose, I believe.”

“Good-day, then—”

“Oh, a good-day to you, lad,” replied the

clerical hero, gazing in some wonder after Sir William, as, at the hint of his honest friend, he proceeded to possess himself of a steed by means which, under other circumstances, might have been termed horse-stealing.—“ A pair of bright eyes for your paathriotism, after all !” continued General Rourke.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT Father Rourke has just said, as well as some former remarks we have ourselves made, will lead the reader to expect the following information.

After the great mass of the Insurgents abandoned their position on Vinegar Hill, in advance upon Wexford—which, as we have seen, was yielded to them without a struggle—still a considerable number, attached to their cause, remained on the rocky eminence, ostensibly as a garrison to guard the conquered town below, but really to shun the chance of open fighting, or else to gratify a malignant nature. We might indeed say, that all who acted upon either of the motives mentioned, were influenced by both. For it is generally true, that the bravest man is the least cruel, the coward most so; that he who hesitates not to expose

himself in a fair field, yet will hesitate to take life treacherously, coolly, or at a disproportioned advantage over his opponent; while the boastful craven, who shrinks from following in his footsteps, glories to show a common zeal in the same cause, by imbruing his hands in the blood of the already conquered, of the weak, or of the defenceless.

And, apart from the new recruits that continued to come in to the popular place of rendezvous, the majority of the executioners and butchers of Vinegar Hill were, according to the accounts of living chroniclers on both sides of the question, individuals of the kind last hinted at. Amongst these, indeed, mingled some who, if peculiar outrage had not temporarily roused their revenge to a maddening thirst for blood, might never have brutalized themselves, and shamed the nature they bore, by participation in such deeds as were done upon the breezy summit of that fatal hill; but still they were outnumbered by their brethren of a different character; men, demons rather, to be found in all communities, whose natural disposition was murderous, and who, but for the coward fear of retributive justice, would

spill blood upon the very hearthstone of household peace. Alas for our boasted nature, when such beings share it !

At the head of the main force, all the principal or more respectable leaders had necessarily taken their departure from "the camp;" yet some persons, also called leaders, remained in nominal command over the skulking mob we have described; themselves scarce raised above the scum and dregs who, for a recognized similarity and aptness of character, rather than for any real merit, chose them as their "capt'ns." And by these men were conducted or despatched, during the previous night and day, different bands, in different directions, to seize on provisions, to drive in cattle and sheep, and to lead captive to the rendezvous all whom they might deem enemies to the cause of what was now pompously styled—little Peter Rooney's heart jumping at the sound—"The Waxford Army of Liberty."

Accordingly, sheep, cows, oxen, and Orangemen, or supposed Orangemen, had, previous to Sir William Judkin's approach to the hill, been abundantly provided for the satiation of the only two cravings felt by their ferocious captors: such of the former as could not

immediately be devoured, being suffered to ramble among the rocks and patches of parched grass on the side of the eminence, until hunger again called for a meal; and such of the latter as, from whim or fatigue, were not summarily despatched, being thrust into a prison,—a singular one—until revenge, or common murder, again roared for its victims.

On the summit of the height stood a roofless, round building, originally intended for a windmill, but never perfected, because, perhaps, in the middle of the projector's work, it became tardily evident to him, that the river at his feet supplied a better impetus for grinding corn than was to be gained from the fitful breeze, after mounting up the side of the steep hill. In Ireland such buildings rarely occur, inasmuch as, almost in every district, the river or the rill invites the erection of the more diligent water-wheel; and, indeed, we have heard that the half-finished pile in question was the first thought of an English settler, accustomed to such structures in his own country, and subsequently abandoned for the reasons already suggested.

But, at the time of our story, this roofless round tower, about seven paces in diameter,

and perhaps twenty-five feet in height, was appropriated to a use very different from that for which it had been planned;—it served, in fact, as a temporary prison for the unfortunate persons captured by the marauding garrison of Vinegar-Hill; and many were the victims thrust through its narrow doorway to meet a horrid death on the pikes of the savages abroad.

Never, before or since, in Ireland, did the summer sun dart fiercer rays than, as if in sympathy with the passions and acts it witnessed, during the hot struggle of civil war in the year 1798. And as Sir William Judkin spurred his jaded, smoking horse towards the eminence, beast and rider seemed faint with heat and toil.

It may be asserted, that a bridegroom elect, if young, love-stricken, and of an ardent nature, will sleep little upon the eve of his wedding-day; that a thousand sweet thoughts—but this is not the time farther to image forth the delightful visions which may chase sleep from his pillow. If the anticipations of bliss prove enemies to repose, the furious working of strong passions—of disappointed love—devouring rage—and drouthy vengeance, will more surely cause nature to spurn at the

thought of slumber. And these assertions being true, it hence appears, that for the last three nights, and up to the evening of the present day, Sir William could have enjoyed no rest. For, supposing him kept waking by happiness upon the first night of the three; recollecting that he passed the next partly in Enniscorthy Castle, partly in his visit to Hartley Court, and partly in his wild career back again to Enniscorthy, until his rencounter with Father Rourke; and the next in Wexford prison, after a day not idly wrought through amid the flames, and smoke, and blood of the conquered town, as well as amid an uninterrupted paroxysm of private passion, which gained its climax, when, by the hand of the very loathed rival he sought to trample down, he was himself foiled and made a captive; and when, in the foamings of his rage and despair, repose must have been impossible;—supposing and recollecting all this, the young Baronet, as with haggard cheeks, with reeking and dust-stained brows, and with fierce, blood-shot eyes, he now strained up the difficult ascent of Vinegar Hill, must have shown the faintness visible in feature and limb, even from a want of “Tired Nature’s sweet restorer, balmy

sleep;" if, indeed, there were no other causes to produce it.

And yet nature was not quite exhausted in him, but rather, in obedience to the stern mandate of his will, summoned his strength for a last effort.

His horse, although stretching every muscle at the goad of his bloody spur, could but creep with distended nostril and bursting eye against the steep and rock-encumbered acclivity: and, impatient of the animal's tardy progress, Sir William sprang, with an imprecation, from his back, and pushed upward; sobbing, indeed, and drenched in perspiration at every step, yet with a constancy and a nerve scarce to be accounted for, unless we say that his heated brain gave him such a stimulus as often imparts incredible strength to the confirmed maniac. He gained a view of the old windmill-tower. Upon its top was hoisted a rude flag of sun-faded green, on which, in clumsy white letters, had been inscribed "Liberty or Death,"—and, had the breeze been brisk enough to float the banner to its full extent, all the words would have met the eye. But the summer-breeze, as if disgusted from its agency, had fled the summit of Vinegar Hill, leaving that baleful flag to droop

over the scene beneath it, until within its heavy folds the word "Liberty" became hidden, and "Death" alone was visible.

His banner it might indeed well appear to be—drooping, in appropriate listlessness, as it exhibited the name of the fell destroyer above the havoc he had made.—For, just below the base of the tower, the rocks and the burnt grass were reddened, and lifeless bodies, frightfully gashed, lay here and there amongst them, some fully to be seen, others partly concealed by the stunted furze and shrubs.

Sir William still toiled upward. In different places along the hill-side, and even at some distance beyond its foot, were promiscuous groups of men, women, and children,—some reposing after fatigue, and others seated round blazing fires of wood and furze. The slaughtered carcasses of sheep and cows often lay in close neighbourhood with the mortal remains of their enemies; and the hungry and houseless Crotty hacked a piece from the plundered animal he had killed for his food, held it on his pike-head before the blaze, and when to his mind thus inartificially cooked, either stretched his rude spit, still holding the morsel on its point, to some member of his family, or voraciously

devoured it himself. And even here, amongst these houseless and friendless people—none, we would add, of the ferocious garrison of the wind-mill prison, but rather some poor wanderers from a burnt cabin, recently come in—even amongst them, surrounded by sights of horror, and stifling their hunger in this almost savage manner, national characteristics were not worn down. The laugh was frequent, as the cook made some droll remark upon the novelty of his occupation, or the excellence of the fare; the words deriving half their import from his tone and manner as he perhaps said—“ Well ! it ’s nate mate, considherin orange sheep ;”—or —“ By gonnies ! orange is the Croppy’s friend, an’ who’ll deny id ;”—holding the broiled flesh high on his pike :—“ Sure it ’s no othler than a friend ’ud feed fat sheep for a body ;—open your mouths an’ shet your eyes, now boys an’ girls—the biggest mouth ’ill have this undher the teeth, I’m thinkin’ :”—and then they gaped and laughed loud, as, with a grave face, the examiner went round to decide on the comparative width of each yawning cavern.

There were carousing groups too, sending illicit whiskey, or other more legal liquor, from hand to hand ; and upon them the beverage

did not fail of its enlivening effect. And leaders appeared, with green ribands, or perhaps a military sash around their persons, or epaulettes on their shoulders, torn, as well as the second-mentioned article, from officers they had slain, inspecting different bands of insurgents as they practised their pike exercise; now driving forward the weapon at a given object; now darting it over their shoulders as if to meet a foe from behind; and now adroitly grasping it at either end with both hands, and bringing into play the elastic staff, as, with great dexterity, they whirled it round their persons, to keep off an attack in front. And all the while arose loud vociferations, each directing the other, according as he arrived, or fancied he had arrived, at greater proficiency than his neighbour.

But Sir William's attention was at length riveted upon the particular throng who, variously occupied, surrounded the narrow entrance to the old tower. The clamorous crowd, with furious action and accents, hustled together, and a first glance told that their present occupation brought into energy all the ferociousness of their nature.

Some of them, who were on horseback, waved

their arms, and endeavoured to raise their voices over the din of those around, who, however, vociferated too ardently to listen to their words; and, as all looked on at the slaughter committed by a line of pikemen drawn up before the tower, whose weapons were but freed from one victim to be plunged into another, it was not merely a shout of triumph, but the more deadly yell of gluttoned vengeance, or malignity, which, drowning the cry of agony that preceded it, burst, with little intermission, from all.

Two sentinels, armed with muskets, guarded the low and narrow entrances to the temporary prison, and grimly did they scowl on the crowded captives pent up within its walls. Another man, gaunt and robust in stature, having a horseman's sword buckled awkwardly at his hip, a green ribbon tied round his foxy felt hat, the crimson sash of a slain militia officer knotted round his loins, two large pistols thrust into it, and a formidable pike in his hand, rushed, from time to time, into the tower, dragged forth some poor victim, put him to a short examination, and then, unless something were urged in favour of the destined sufferer, sufficient to snatch him from

the frightful fate numbers had already met, he flung him to his executioners. And this man, so furious, so savage, and so remorseless, was Shawn-a-Gow.

Armed also with a musket, and stationed between the line of pikemen and the door of the tower, in order that he might be the first agent of vengeance, stood the ill-favoured scoundrel we have mentioned in a former chapter—the murderous Murtoch Kane, late a “stable-boy” at the inn of Enniscorthy. This fellow would take life for pastime; but still, as he levelled at his victim, proud of the privilege of anticipating his brother-executioners, his brow ever curled into the murderer’s scowl.

The hasty interrogatories proposed to each cringing captive by Shawn-a-Gow, midway between the tower and the pikemen, had exclusive reference to the religious creed of the party; and the acknowledgment of Protestantism, deemed synonymous with Orangeism, at once proclaimed, or rather was assumed as proclaiming, a deadly enemy, meriting instant vengeance; yet in this, the rabble-insurgents of Vinegar Hill acted with a curious inconsistency. Many Protestants held command in the main force of which they called themselves adherents;—nay, the individual se-

lected by unanimous choice as "Commander-in-Chief," was of the established religion of the State. But why pause to point out any departure from principle in the persons of such men as are before us? Were their deeds to be justly visited on the more courageous as well as more numerous bodies of the insurgents, we might indeed occupy ourselves with the question.

Panting and nearly fainting, Sir William Judkin gained the tower, and, ere he could address a question to those around, stood still to recover his breath. Two prisoners were dragged forth by the relentless Shawn a-Gow.

"Are you a Christian?" he demanded, glaring into the face of one trembling wretch, as he grasped him by the collar.

"I am, Jack Delouchery," he was answered.

"Are you a right Christian?"

"I am a Protestant."

"Ay—the Orange."

"No, not an Orangeman."

"Now, hould silence, you dog! every mother's son o' ye is Orange to the backbone. Is there any one here to say a word for this Orangeman?"

There was an instant's silence, during which

the pale, terror-stricken man gazed beseechingly upon every dark and ominous face around him; but the cry "Pay him his reckonin'" soon sealed the victim's doom; and with a fierce bellow, the words "Ay, we'll weed the land o' ye—we'll have only one way;—we'll do to every murtherer o' ye what ye'd do to us;"—was the furious sentence of the smith, as he pitched him forward. Murtoch Kane shot, and a dozen pikes did the rest.

The smith seized the second man. One of the lookers-on started forward, claimed him as a friend, and told some true or feigned story of his interference previous to the insurrection, between Orange outrage and its victims; and he was flung to his patron by Shawn-a-Gow, with the carelessness of one who presided over life and death; the same savage action tossing the all but dead man into life, which had hurled the previous sufferer into eternity.

Sir William Judkin, as the smith again strode to the door of the prison, came forward to address him, with the question ready to burst from his chopped and parched lips, when the man whose name he would have mentioned, already in the gripe of Shawn, was dragged forth into view.

The Baronet stepped back. His manner changed from its fiery impetuosity. He now felt no impulse to bound upon a prey escaping from his hands. In the Gow's iron grasp, and in the midst of a concourse of sworn enemies, the devoted Talbot stood sufficiently secured; and, as if to indulge the new sensations of revenge at last gratified, or to compose himself to a purpose that required system in its execution, he stood motionless, his lynx-eye darting from beneath his black brows arrowy glances upon his rival, and his breathing, which recently had been the pant of anxiety, altered into the long-drawn respiration of resolve.

Captain Talbot appeared dispoiled of his military jacket, his helmet, his sash, and all the other tempting appendages of warlike uniform, which long ago had been distributed amongst the rabble commanders of "the camp." No man can naturally meet death with a smile: it is affectation even in the hero that assumes it; it is bravado, on other lips, to hide a quailing heart: it was the vanity of consistency in the stoic, because his disciples were looking on with their stiles and tablets to minute his last words and conduct to posterity; had he been bleeding to death in a desert, the echoes of the solitude

would have made answer to his moans. Even He who triumphed over death, and whose example must teach how to die, as well as how to live, prayed that the bitter cup might pass away; and even the consolations of His religion will but serve to clothe the features with solemn resignation to the loss of life. But, particularly in the event of a sudden and terrible summons from existence, hero and coward, saint and sinner, must present alike, to the approach of the dread summoner, though perhaps in different degrees of expression, an eye of horror and a pallid cheek. And Captain Talbot, whatever might have been the strength and the secrets of his heart, as he instinctively resisted the compelling arm of Shawn-a-Gow, was pale and trembling, and his glance was that of terror.

Hopless of mercy, he spoke no word, used no remonstrance; it was unavailing. Before him bristled the red pikes of his ruthless executioners; behind him stood Murtoch Kane, cocking his musket; and the grasp that dragged him along told at once the determination and the strength of the infuriated giant.

"There's a dozen o' ye, I'm sure!" sneered Shawn; "I'll stand out to spake for Sir Thomas Hartley's hangman." The tone of bitter, savage

mockery in which he spoke, grated at Talbot's ear, as first grinning into his prisoner's face, he then glanced in fierce triumph over the crowd.

"A good pitch to him, Capt'n Delouchery," cried one of the executioners: "don't keep us waitin'; we're dhry an' hungry for him:" and a general murmur of execration followed, and an impatient shout at the delay of vengeance.

"My undeserved death will be avenged, murderers as you are," said the ghastly Captain Talbot, in reckless serenity of accent.

Shawn-a-Gow held him at arm's length, and with an expression of mixed ferocity and amazement again stared into his face.

"An' you're callin' us murtherers, are you?" he said, after a moment's pause—"Boys! bould Croppy boys, d' ye hear him? Tell me, ar'n't you the man that stood by the gallows foot, wid the candle in your hand, waitin' till the last gasp was sent out o' the lips o' him who often opened his dour to you, and often sat atin an dhrinkin wid you, under his own roof?—ar'n't you, Talbot, that man?"

No answer came from the accused.

"Yon don't say no to me; ay! because

you ean't;—an' you call out murtherers on us.—Are you here, Pat Murphy?" he roared.

"I'm here," replied the man who had before raised the first cry for instant vengeance.

"Do you know any thing good this caller o' names done to you?"

"It was him an' his yeomen hung the only born brother o' me."

"An' d' you hear that, *you* murtherer?—d' you hear that, an' have you the bouldness in you to spake to us?—I'll tell you, you Orange *skibbeah*! we'll keep you up for the last; ay, by the sowl o' my son! we'll keep you for the very last, till you're half dead wid the fear, an' till we'll have time to pay you in the way I'd glory to see or—come here, Murphy; come out, here—stand close—you ought to be first; take your time wid him; keep him feeling id, as long as a poor Croppy 'ud feel the rope, when they let him down only to pull him up again.

The man stepped forward as he was ordered. Shawn-a-Gow swung the struggling Captain Talbot around. With the instinctive avoidance of a terrible death, the prisoner grasped with his disengaged hand the brawny arm that held him, and, being a young man of strength,

clung to it in desperation—in desperation without hope. But, although he was young and strong and desperate, too, he opposed the sinew of a Hercules. The smith, with his single arm, dashed him backwards and forwards, until, maddened by Talbot's continued clinging, and his agile recovery of his legs at every toss, Shawn's mouth foamed; he seized in his hitherto inactive hand the grasping arms of the struggler, tore them from their hold, and "Now, Murphy," he bellowed, as Murphy couched his pike, and pushed down his hat and knit his brows to darkness. Shawn-a-Gow's right side was turned to the executioner; his black, distorted face, to the weapon upon which he should cast his victim; he stood firmly on his divided legs, in the attitude that enabled him to exert all his strength in the toss he contemplated; when Sir William Judkin, hitherto held back by a wish perhaps to allow all vicissitudes of suffering to visit his detested rival, sternly stepped between the writhing man and his fate.

"Stop, Delouchery!" he said, in a deep, impressive voice; and before the smith could express his astonishment or rage at the interruption,—“stop!” he said again, in higher accents; “this man,”—scowling as he used the term of

contempt—"this man must be given into my hands—I must kill him;"—he continued in a whisper close at Shawn's ear—"I must kill him myself."

"Why so?" growled the smith.

"He is the murderer of my father-in-law."

"People here has just as good a right to him," answered Shawn-a-Gow surlily, much vexed at the interruption he had experienced, and scarce able to stay his hand from its impulse: "here's Pat Murphy, an' he hung the only born brother iv him: and Murphy must have a pike through Talbot: *I* had one through Whaley."

"And he shall. But, Delouchery, listen farther: Talbot has forced off my wife—has her concealed from me—Sir Thomas Hartley's daughter: after murdering the father, he would destroy the child—and that child my wife. Before he dies, I must force him to confess where she is to be found—and then, Murphy and I for it, between us."

"I'll soon force out iv him, for you, where the wife is."

"No, Delouchery—he will tell nothing here."

"An' where will you bring him to make him tell?"

"Only to yonder field, at the bottom of the hill."

The smith paused, and seemed resolving the proposition in all its points. He cast his eyes around. "Mollony, come here—Farrell, come here," he said. Two men advanced from the interior of the prison.

"Where's the rope that tied the Orangemen that cum into the camp from Benclody?"

"It's to the good for another job, Capt'n."

Without farther explanation, he forced Captain Talbot backward into the prison; reappeared with him, his hands tied behind his back; gave the end of the rope into Sir William Judkin's hand; then he called Murphy aside, and, in a whisper of few words, directed him to accompany "Curnel Judkin," an' give him a helping hand, or watch him close, as the case might seem to demand: and then turning to the Baronet, "There he's for you now; an' have a care an' do the business well."

It would be difficult to divine what were Captain Talbot's feelings when he recognised the strange interference between him and his terrible doom. The first emphatic words addressed by Sir William Judkin to Shawn-a-Gow told nothing of his real design, although they

certainly proclaimed his wish to save his rival from immediate death. The subsequent part of the conversation between the Baronet and the smith was begun by the former in a whisper, and followed up by the latter, while he held the subject of it at arm's length, in a low, inaudible growl: so that Talbot could only suspect its import. And if his still pallid features told the secrets of his mind, he did indeed suspect; for, mixed with the horror which had lately been their sole expression, eager inquiry, doubt, and trembling solicitude, now alternately possessed them.

He was silent, however; and by the time that he descended the hill-side, guarded at one shoulder by his rival, who held the end of the rope which strongly tied him, and at the other by Murphy, who still clutched the weapon he had just couched for his death, Captain Talbot seemed collected, too.

The last slanting rays of the setting sun shot upward against the slope of the eminence, as the victim and his escort strode down to its base; and although that brilliant beam can turn to a mass of vermillion and gold the most unsightly vapour which hangs in the heavens, or fling a glowing interest over objects the

most rude or uncouth in themselves, it could not make less horrible the horrors of the steep hill-side. Suddenly, the burning orb sank from view behind the distant curvings of the extensive panorama spreading all around, and night began to fall, more appropriately to hide what the glorious summer-evening only rendered frightfully distinct.

As was generally the case amongst the insurgent multitudes, such of the occupants of the rude camp as had cabins to repair to, were now bending from the hill to pass the night under a roof; while others, and those by far the greater number, stretched themselves by some rock, or patch of furze, to sleep beneath the twinkling of the stars. The work of death ceased for a time. With an approach towards military usage, the leaders were placing sentinels at different distances, to give notice of any approach of the enemy, and imparting to them some oddly-sounding and fantastic watchword. The cooking-fires sank down, and comparative stillness reigned over the barren extent that had so lately sounded to the shouts of carousal, to the screams of agony, and to the fierce clamour of maddened passions.

And amid this altered aspect of the savage scene, Sir William Judkin and Captain Talbot entered, through a gap in its fence, a lonesome field, northward from the base of Vinegar Hill. It may seem a subject for inquiry why the Baronet thus chose to convey his prisoner to a spot so solitary, and so far removed from observation; but men bent upon any fearful act will, perhaps unconsciously, select a fit place to do it in. And Sir William might have had some vague idea of the kind, as he strode towards this remote field, holding a stern silence, during which he probably nerved himself for the coming event, and pulling, at every step, the end of his victim's manacle; and his notions of an appropriate situation, and of the conduct he was to pursue, might have together been arrived at, when, in about the middle of the waste ground, he suddenly halted, whirled short upon Talbot, raised his person high, as he struck the end of his pike-staff into the sod, and then leaning on the weapon, and glaring a cool though deep glance from beneath his meeting brows, at last broke the long silence.

"Talbot, where is my wife?" His tones were not loud, yet they sounded fiercely distinct.

"*Your wife?*" repeated Talbot expressively, as he returned his rival's stare; and his voice wanted little of the rigid composure of that in which he had been addressed, while it seemed an echo as well of the Baronet's cadence as of his words.

The querist started; perhaps at the recognition of a resolved mood, cool as his own, when something more to his purpose was naturally to have been expected in Talbot's situation.

"Heaven and earth!—do you only repeat my question? Have you heard it distinctly?"

"Yes, distinctly."

"And will not answer it?"

"No."

"No?—I have saved your life!"

"That is yet to be shown."

"How?—how, better than I have already shown it?"

"Set me at liberty."

"You would do so in my situation?"

Talbot was silent. Sir William repeated his question.

"I will make no reply."

"You need not. I know well in what manner you would use over me the power I now have over you."

"If so, pass the subject."

"Talbot, still you can bribe me to set you free. Speak but a few words, and I cut this rope, and give you safeguard beyond the last insurgent outpost."

"Propose the words."

"First—I again demand—where is my wife?"

"You mean, Sir Thomas Hartley's daughter?"

"Be it so: how have you disposed of her?"

"Still I must decline to answer you."

"Well, this at least, this—" Sir William began to tremble, while his captive remained self-possessed, and he hissed a question into Talbot's ear.

"No!" was the quick answer: "No! she is yet, what she has ever been, innocent as the angel inhabitant of Heaven!"

"Swear it!—swear by the Eternal Ruler of the Universe, who, in the silence of this night, listens to record your oath; and, Talbot, to record it for you, or against you."

"By that Great Judge, before whom in a few seconds I may appear, I swear it!"

"Well—I believe you; for, Talbot, could you, without peril to your eternal lot, answer me otherwise—otherwise I had been answered."

Sir William's voice sank low, expressing the

relief his feelings experienced, and for a moment his head drooped towards his breast: but suddenly he raised it to its former fierce elevation.

“Villain!—and you have well and truly judged my character—you dared not suppose I could drag you here, bound in a felon rope, at my mercy, and not kill you; kill you—ay! and your last answer has sealed your doom! Murderer, miscreant, fool!—yes, fool!—your death now becomes necessary—now—here—this instant, inevitable, to hinder you from accomplishing over me the triumph you have not yet attained: you know me, and I know you; yet, with all the stains upon your accursed name, I can credit your oath, and you die, that you may not disentitle yourself to repeat it.”

“And do not you suppose,” retorted Talbot, still seemingly echoing the tones in which he was addressed—“do not you suppose that, after understanding your character and your nature, I had expected mercy at your hands when I gave that answer?—and call me not fool, for, fool, at least, you do not believe I am. You know that, from your first interference on the top of the hill, I read your purpose; that

I did not dream of averting it by my reply to a question worthy of you; that all along I expected you would coolly shed my blood;—now, point your pike at once, and rid me of your abhorred company!”

“Ay?”—laughed out Sir William Judkin, at last fully excited—“ay! by the spacious heavens above us!—and I feared—I trembled at the thought that any other man than myself might have a share in killing you. You saw me whisper and motion from us, ere we entered this field, the man who, on account of the murder of his beloved brother, through your agency, pretends to dispute the right with me: I bribed him to leave us together for a moment; had he refused, I would have earned the opportunity of dealing with you alone, by first stretching him at my feet. No hand but this—this—shall dare to let forth one drop of your blood—for it is all mine—mine every little atom!”

“The Lord have mercy on my soul!” said Talbot solemnly, and now not without emotion;—“Oh, well I know it—the least animal knows its natural murderer; and I—could I mistake you?—The Lord have mercy on my soul!” he repeated in an exhausted voice, and

yet in such fervour of appeal as a courageous man assumes when, though taking a farewell of this life, he can cast forward a strong look into eternity—"The Lord have mercy on my soul!" he said, for the third time.

"And," resumed Sir William Judkin, in his former strain of loud exultation—"I could satisfy a sceptic, if he dared to raise a doubt, of my fair, my indisputable claim to every bubble that courses round your heart!"

"I ask but one minute's liberty to kneel," interrupted Talbot, evidently not attending to the last words—"hold the rope more at length, and only let me kneel."

"First hear me," answered his rival, twining it yet another coil round his left-hand, while he grasped the pike in his right. "Even to yourself I will recite the grounds of my exclusive proprietorship in your life, and gainsay them if you can"—his high voice sank ominously low:—"you dared to cross my love—you dared to raise your eyes to the very lady I had wooed and won—you leagued and plotted with a common ruffian to murder me—you sent him to waylay me—upon the felon gallows, hanging like a dog, you watched the last agonies of my father-in-law—by perjury you con-

trived his fate, and by perjury you would have doomed me to the same death of ignominy—Next, with the hands that all but strangled her father, you tore away my wife, and you now refuse to render her back to me, or to discover the place of her imprisonment. But,—” his voice sank lower still—“but, Talbot, the deadliest item is to be told—you dared, too—”

Sir William stopped, for the footsteps of Murphy sounded near, as he said,—“Tundheran’ fire, Curnel! will you keep him talkin’ all the night long?—Let me have my share o’ the work, till I be goin’.”

“Here, Murphy,” cried Sir William, speaking rapidly—“what value do you set on your revenge against this man?”

“What value duv I—what?” asked the gaping fellow, as he endeavoured to comprehend the question.

“Sir, take these two guineas,” rejoined Sir William eagerly; “take them, and leave him to me—I would have no partner in putting him to death.”

“Och, by the hokey!” replied Murphy, and he could say no more, for still he was not able to understand why he should get so considerable a bribe.

“Or, if you persist,”—Sir William burst into a rage—“I will first kill you, and then stretch him upon your body!—Begone, I say!”

“An’ is id to go away, your honour is givin’ the good money?”

“Yes—I would purchase from you the sole privilege of taking vengeance upon him.”

“That’s as much as to say you’ll pike him yourself, widout any body to help you?”

“Ay!” cried Sir William exultingly—“pike him while an inch can quiver!”

“Well, I wish you loock, Curnel: the only spite I have to ’im is on the head o’ the poor brether o’ me; but sence you say you’ll do id for the both iv us, at oncet, an’ do it so well, into the bargain, sure, there’s no differ betuxt us;—good-night!”

“Leave me! quick, quick!”

“Och, as quick as you plase: to tell the blessed truth, I had only half a heart for id in the night-time, this a-way, an’ in this ugly, lonesome place, whatever I’d do by the light o’ the sun:” and the man plodded towards the hill, wondering much at the fancy of “the Curnel,” who, “it was asy enough to see,

thought the pike-exercise to be great fun, when he'd give two yellow guineas to have id all to himsef, an' he ready to ate one up in a bit, jest for not takin' 'em at the first offer."

"And now, Talbot," said Sir William Judkin, "we are quite alone; prepare yourself—you stand here my bound and manacled victim, and I will slay you."

"Finish the last charge you were about to make against me, when your fellow-murderer interrupted us," replied Talbot.

"No, Talbot—not now—I perceive it would gratify you, and I will not. You know my meaning,—that is sufficient."

"Then, even of you, I can crave a last boon—one already preferred—let me kneel down."

"Ay, there—" he held the rope at its full length, so that Talbot could, without struggling, gain the position he wished;—"it tallies with my humour—I am unwilling to spare you one pang: kneel—look your last at the bright stars,—think your last thought of her whom you leave behind to my love, and to my triumph over you,—fully feel what it is to die by the hand of an exulting rival, in youth,

in hope, and—a few hours ago—almost his conqueror;—I can kill you but once; and the torments these thoughts must give you, will prolong, in anticipation, to my heart, the positive enjoyment of the final act. Nor dare to build a lying comfort upon the hope of my not discovering the place to which you have forced her. Fool! I call you so again, fool! I will find my wife—ay, my wife, Talbot, if she yet lives upon the surface of the earth!”

Captain Talbot had quickly availed himself of the permission to fall upon his knees. For a moment he seemed occupied in mental prayer, his eyes turned upward; then he suddenly broke forth aloud.

“I have fearful things to answer for at thy Judgment Seat—in thy mercy, accept my present repentance, on the verge of an early and fearful death. And O Almighty Father of my being! if the prayer of a wretched sinner can ascend into thy presence, give ear to my last earthly petition: permit not the approach of my base murderer to the mistress of my heart! stretch forth thy interposing arm between them: shield her, save her!—thou wilt, O God, thou wilt! I feel the comfort of thy promise in my soul! Unworthy as I am, my prayer

has been heard !” He started to his feet, as quickly as his pinioned arms would permit him, and addressed Sir William Judkin—“ Yes ! I have had a view into futurity. The spirit of prophecy is upon me. You can slaughter me ; but listen—never, never, will you enjoy her smiles from whom you thus separate me ! Never will her white arms clasp my murderer’s neck ! And I leave her but a little time before you—you, too, must sink into an early and ignominious grave ; and during your short sojourn upon earth, my watchful spirit, hovering over your most secret steps, will still protect my beloved mistress from your touch !”

“ This, then, to free you for your mission !” exultingly cried Sir William Judkin. While Talbot spoke, he had gradually shortened the pike-handle in his grasp, and pointed its head to his victim’s breast, and with cool and deadly certainty he was making the push forward, when he felt the weapon seized behind him, and forcibly tugged backward. At the same instant, both his arms were secured, and the pistol, which he had thrust into his bosom, was snatched from him by a woman’s hand, and that woman the same through whose agency he had escaped from the castle of Enniscorthy.

While he struggled desperately to force himself out of the grasp of two strong men, each of whom held separately one of his arms, the woman cut asunder Captain Talbot's bonds: and, "Now!" she said, in the same impressive voice which on a former occasion had startled Sir William Judkin; "now, Talbot, fly: for you are free to fly! Pause not an instant: your eye tells the vengeance you would in turn take upon him—but dare not to injure a hair of his head! *If I have saved him from the guilt of shedding your blood, I can and will farther save him from death or injury at your hands,—fly, and do not parley: fly while you are not prevented!*"

"We meet again!" cried Captain Talbot, walking close up to his rival; and then he made use of his freedom, and left the spot.

"And *we have* met again!" said the woman, also confronting Sir William, the moment Talbot had departed.

"Fiend from hell!" exclaimed the Baronet, madly renewing his struggles, and now more successful than at first. One arm was disengaged, and with its clenched hand he struck his second captor to the ground, and bounded backward at full liberty, catching up the pike

that had been forced from him, and then flung upon the grass.

“Perish, wretch ! whoever you are !” he continued, darting his weapon at the man he had just felled ; and the faint exclamation of his victim was cut short by the flutter of his last breath.

“And now !” glaring around for another prey, but the second man had disappeared ; and the woman stood on the fence of the field, crying out after him—“Stand, coward !—come back, or he escapes me !—I will not fire upon him, and alone I cannot secure him !” Ere she had done speaking, Sir William had closely approached her, with the stealthy stride of the wild Indian creeping upon his foe ;—the rustle of the grass under his feet caused her to turn ; when she saw him so near, a suppressed scream escaped her, and she jumped down, and was hid from his view by the fence.

Eagerly he sprang after her : in his haste, and perhaps on account of the exhausted state of his frame, his foot slipped, and he fell backward. Regaining his feet, with curses and imprecations, he stood, at a second effort, outside the field. A figure rapidly made way towards the town, along a narrow pathway leading from

the base of Vinegar-hill, and he believed they were a woman's garments which fluttered on the light breeze. Sir William pursued with his utmost speed, still keeping the fugitive in view; but at a particular point, the pathway ran between rising grounds, which deeply shadowed it, and there the moving object escaped his eye. Footsteps, however, still sounded before him, and he did not relax his speed; they grew fainter, and he summoned all his strength even to increase it: they suddenly ceased, and he stopped, panting and staggering, to look around. He had passed the narrow track leading from Enniscorthy to the hill; he was in the ruined suburb which had been consumed upon the day of the late attack; silence reigned through all the black desolation that surrounded him, and no living creature appeared in view.

"I am lost," he muttered, keenly aroused to a sense of the disappointments of the last half-hour—"on every side lost: hell and earth league against me!" and furiously shouting, as if in defiance of the faintness he felt approaching, Sir William sank upon the ground: overstrained nature could no longer bear up against the fatigue and the agitation he had for nearly three days and nights endured.

CHAPTER III.

It is not with us always a matter of choice that we present before the reader pictures of human passion and excess, which, we are aware, may inspire some tyro-critic, whom they instruct in the secrets of his fellow-creatures, with a hint, whispered over the shoulders of such of our patrons as, like the indolent Gray, read new novels on sofas. But we paint from the people of a land, amongst whom, for the last six hundred years, national provocations have never ceased to keep alive the strongest, and often the worst passions of our nature ; whose pauses,—during that long lapse of a country's existence,—from actual conflict in the field, have been but so many changes into mental strife ; and who, to this day, are held prepared, should the war-cry be given, to rush at each other's

throats, and enact scenes that, in the columns of a newspaper,

(“ That folio of four pages, happy work !
Which not even critics criticise, ”)

would show more terribly vivid than in these chapters any selected by us, from former facts, for the purposes of candid though slight illustration.

Necessity, then, rather than choice, sometimes compels us to exhibit individuals and occurrences proper to the community that supplies originals for our study. We do not pourtray the minds, the hearts, the habits, the manners, or the acts of a tranquillized and a happy people ; least of all do we pourtray the quiet and passionless decorum which can only result from a well-knit, long-confirmed, prosperous, and perhaps selfish state of society.

If, therefore, some such critic as has before been mentioned, occasionally object to us the extravagance of our delineation, or the harshness of our colouring, his quarrel is with human nature, and, it may be, with human policy, and not with us.

Should he invariably grow pale, or get ill, at sketches of natural passions, and at the character they form, or the events they produce, then,

indeed, we would admit his quarrel to be personal, as regards ourselves; yet, for all that, we could not afford to administer to his washy, water-colour taste, by wholly withdrawing our eyes from those sublime objects of moral study, which, above all others, stamp breadth and depth upon the artist's canvass.

Still it is, to ourselves, rather a painful labour than a pleasant relaxation, when we are obliged to go through some scenes we would gladly leave unnoticed; and, on the contrary, it is truly gratifying when, as is now about to be the case, we can consistently drop into company with certain of our characters, from whom we need apprehend no furious ebullitions of passion, and no wild aggression against the species to which we all belong.

We have to recur to Hartley Court, and describe some events which occurred in that desolate mansion immediately after Sir William Judkin left it, upon the night of his escape from the castle of Enniscorthy. The old spirit-broken butler listened to the galloping clatter of Sir William's horse, until the sounds died away in the distance, and then slowly quitted the stable-yard and re-entered the house.

His aged wife, the housekeeper, and Nanny the Knitter, were seated in the kitchen,—the one holding her dotted apron to her eyes, as she rocked backward and forward; the other occupying, even under existing circumstances, a certain “cricket stool,” which, during her many visits, she had always considered her proper throne. Invariably, indeed, upon her arrival to share the warmth of the kitchen-fire in Hartley Court, Nanny would look about for this article of furniture, and when asked to be seated, reply, “Yes, wid a heart-and-a-half, my honey pet, an’ bless the providhers for the *cooramuch** fire, but I don’t see my stool any where” (although she could point out its possessor); and this declaration of partiality for “her stool” never passed unheeded; and she would carry it to the corner close to “the hob,” and when established upon it, become president of the gossip for the evening. On the present occasion, however, although occupying her usual post, little appearance of former comfort was to be seen even in Nanny’s corner. When oppressed by extreme misery, people grow indifferent to those little external arrangements

* Snug.

which confer upon their dwellings and persons a character of cheeriness. Something within the mind insinuates, "I do not care to attend to such matters now,—let them remain as they are." The fire had burnt down in the large kitchen-grate; many of the culinary utensils were in disorder; a chair, or a form, remained upset, no one caring to put it upright; or each saying, perhaps, "It may lie there, for the master is down too;" a solitary candle, only half illuminating the spacious and arched apartment, was allowed to flare on without trimming, until the drooping wick ate into its side; and a very old black cat, who, from the hour of her birth, had never before needed to approach, for her perfect enjoyment, nearer than some feet to the fire, now sat but half asleep in its ashes.

Yet, comfortless as was the appearance of the kitchen, the old butler and his wife preferred to occupy it upon this evening, rather than sit in their own room, where, they said, "they had no right to sit any longer, now that their master was gone." No other persons were inmates of the desolate house. It became necessary, that none who could not strictly be depended upon should learn the place of concealment into which

the plate was to be removed ; and a consultation ensued between the projectors of the important scheme, and, at Nanny's suggestion, many of the inferior domestics were sent away from Hartley Court. Two females, who could not without strong cause be summarily disposed of, supplied good reason to the housekeeper for their immediate dismissal, by attempting, amid the general confusion and dismay, to pilfer some valuable articles. Timothy Reily, as is known, had been apprehended along with his master ; and three of his male fellow-servants, who were refused admission, as evidences for Sir Thomas, at the gate of the castle of Enniscorthy, only returned to the house to communicate the intelligence, together with that of the Baronet's conviction, and then set off, infuriated, to join the insurgents, and revenge his death upon the party they considered as his murderers.

Long after the butler's return to the kitchen, silence continued between the sad trio. Nanny at last spoke.

“ Misthress Flannigan, my honey, the darlin' iv a Sir William is heart-scalded—the Lord look down upon him, poor crature, this blessed an' holy night !”

Nanny had never been distinguished for any

great ardency of feeling. Since her husband's death, little had occurred to arouse the passion of grief within her equable breast: all went on well with her; free from trouble, and certain that the morrow would find her as welcome a visitant amongst her neighbours as she had ever been, she saw her weasel-skin purse gradually distending to portion off her only daughter; and when that daughter was addressed by a "daler," from the town of Ross,—a middle-aged man, who had come into Nanny's district to make purchases in the way of his traffic,—and when she visited his remote establishment, found it "snug," and consequently agreed that her Nancy should become its mistress, the old woman remained without care of any kind. For twenty years she had shed no tear on her own account; it could, therefore, scarce be expected that she should weep much over the sorrows of others. And, in truth, though generally present amid the domestic griefs of all in her neighbourhood, none ever reckoned on seeing her join the mourning wail. It was only calculated that her constant habits of bending her minute mind to determine what was best to be done under every change of circumstances, would give them the advantage of her care and guidance of

affairs, which they were too much afflicted to look after; and, for Nanny's own part, her predominant spirit of curiosity, and her trade of intermeddling in other people's concerns, supplied abundant excitement,—even denying her all claims to benevolence, which we by no means do,—for exertions invariably presumed on, and seldom unprofitably undertaken. Upon the present unparalleled occasion, however, she felt the necessity of making a show of sympathy with the weeping domestics. It was something like a mumbling, ill-finished attempt at a moaning sound, which she sent forth, moving her head from right to left as its accompaniment; and thus she prefaced the observation we have just recorded; and when the tears and real sobs of her auditors came afresh at the associations of complicated misery her words quickly started, still Nanny could contribute no more than her gurgling noise, and the mechanical motion of her strangely attired head.

“An' the poor disthreacted barrowknight is gone back wid himself to Enniscorthy, Misthress Flannigan, my honey,” she continued.

“I fear so,” said the butler—“Where they will soon hang him, as well as my poor masther. Och! och! see what a world it is, an' what

people is in id ! Where 's the one 'ud think, this day twelvemonth, that Square Capt'n Talbot, that used to get his bit an' his sup amost every day undher this poor roof, an' be walkin' out, in the mornin' an' in the everin', wid the purty Miss Eliza,—Lady Eleezabeth Judkin, barrowknight, that is now,—that he 'd be the man to bring all this throuble on his good benefactors."

"I nêver was desaved by him," said the housekeeper; "he was a black, forbiddin'-lookin' young man, except when he put on the smiles for my darlin' young lady. May ill fortune, as black as his looks an' his heart, sthrew his road every day he sees the light ! An' Sir William Judkin, the honey pet, who 'd think he could be sich a wicked gintleman,—him that once an' always had the good-humour on his hansome face ;—an' sure, it was all as one as a thing done, out-an'-out, when he swore he 'd pitch me from the winder, blessed be the Heavens !"

"He can't be blamed,—sure, what happened was enough to turn any Christian saint into a madman ;—but, ah ! the Lord purtect us ! what a thraitor-way the other went to work !" said Mrs. Flannigan.

“ A man that’s crassed,” resumed Nanny, “ listens to ould Nick’s whispers, an’ sure, he whispered the worst o’ bad thoughts into the ould sweetheart’s head :—bud stop,” cried the acute-eared old woman—“ isn’t there some one thryin to get in? Did you boult the passage-dour, comin’ back from the stables, Misther Flannigan, my honey?”

“ No,” replied the butler, alarmed at the recollection ; “ I forgot id in my throuhle.”

“ Well, wait here,” said the intrepid Knitter ; —“ put the candle undher the biler, an’ I’ll stale asy, an’ thry to boult it for you.”

A passage led to a door opening into the back-yard, and along its sides were other doors communicating with other apartments — the housekeeper’s-room, the larder, the pantry, the servants’-hall, and servants’ bed-chambers. Through this passage Nanny, “ widout makin’ mooch noise wid her feet,” alertly glided. Recollecting the apartment into which Sir William Judkin had burst his way, she stopped a moment to turn the key in the back-door that opened into it ; and then, as well acquainted as the old black cat in the kitchen, with every step she should take, continued her progress in the dark.

The noise which had at first alarmed her was but indistinctly heard, having occurred at the front of the house ; but, to her consternation, as she approached the back-door, the heavy latch was raised, and persons quickly entered. She crouched by the wall, near enough to hear some of their conversation, and the deeply-impressed tones of one of the speakers made her shiver with terror, for they were the same that once, under a certain lime-tree, when Nanny was detected in evesdropping, had threatened her with annihilation if she should ever again be similarly encountered.

“ All right, Sam !” said the voice ;—“ we ’re in, as sure as the Divil is in Rathdowny—an’ I b’lieve that ’s a thing there ’s little doubt about. Are the other boys comin’?—we must put a face on id, an’ lay id all at the dour o’ Whaley’s yeomen.”

“ They ’re thryin at the shetthers abroad,” answered he of the wooden-leg ; “ I ’ll have ’em in to you, wid a hop-step-an’-jump.”

Nanny heard Sam pass out into the yard : to hide herself was now her only thought. It was a case of life and death to her ;—self only could be considered. She did not, therefore, dream of stealing back with any intelligence to the

kitchen, but glided into the housekeeper's room, nearer at hand, so noiselessly, that even the acute and listening ear of Bill Nale heard not a stir.

In this room was a very large chest, such as may yet be found in the possession of Irish housewives of the middling class, who keep under one lock their wardrobe, their linen, their important papers, and sundry articles of value : and beneath its massive lid Mrs. Flannigan, sharing her husband's cares and duties, had deposited the plate belonging to Hartley Court, bedding it upon a quantity of house-linen. The reader is aware that, previous to Sir William Judkin's visit to the house upon this evening, the old butler, his wife, and Nanny the Knitter, had been employed in conveying the treasure to a place of concealment. His loud knocking interrupted their task, and sent them to seek hiding-holes for themselves, but not before the greater number of the valuable articles had been safely disposed of. A few spoons, a pair of candlesticks, and some such matters, they did abandon, however, to the supposed intruders ; and in their haste and panic also forgot to close the chest. The latter fact Nanny particularly recollected as

she crept across the room. By some extraordinary contrivance she got into the place of refuge she had contemplated, pulled down the lid "azy, azy;" it was fastened by a spring-lock, which instantly shot home; and Nanny as instantly recollected that she was now a prisoner, perhaps for a longer time than she had reckoned on.

Indeed, after vainly trying to raise the lid again, this thought startled the old dame almost out of her sense of the danger she had incarcerated herself to avoid;—but some noise through the house soon recalled her superior terrors of her persecutor; and then came the assurance of perfect obscurity from his dreaded eye; and she crouched down upon her couch of linen, quite resigned even to protracted imprisonment, since by it she could escape the dark fate Bill Nale had, under certain conditions, promised her.

With one ear at the keyhole, and her mouth wide open, as if through it also she hoped to admit sound, and her old withered heart siniting her ribs so forcibly that she could hear every blow, Nanny listened for a considerable time. At first, the noise through the house sank into silence; then it arose again, faintly and remote,

however, to her gaping ear ; then a second time died away ; and delusive Hope, who deceives, it may safely be asserted, as often as she points to reality, whispered through the only breathing-hole of her prison, that Nanny had indeed escaped the fangs of the person whom, above all others in the world, she had reason to fear.

Her heart moderated its assaults against her ribs. She stretched herself at full length on her couch, with something like a return of her usual sensations of comfort ; but, alas ! the clamour of voices, and the stamping of feet, now arose nearer than before ; they echoed through the vaulted passage leading to the room in which she had taken shelter ; closer and closer they came ; until at last, with sensations almost of dissolution, with failing breath and a steaming frame, she heard the door flung open, and persons rudely enter.

“ Where have you put the pikes to hide, you old Crop ?—The house was full of ’em—we must find ’em afore we quit,” said a voice, which, even under the disguise of an assumed tone, the wretched Knitter knew to be that of her enemy. And she at once guessed, recollecting the words she had before overheard in the passage, that he and his associates had

assumed the garb of yeomen, in order to commit plunder with impunity. Such indeed was the case. The disguise could easily be obtained, nothing more being necessary than to strip the dead bodies of the loyal soldiers slain during the last few days; and by these means Nale and his gang came fully caparisoned as the King's adherents.

"I have never looked on a pike since I was born, gentlemen—never, I declare honestly; and there is not such a thing in the house, to my knowledge."

"Ay, a purty story, that the ould Croppy wouldn't have the dárthers ready for his men. What's in this big chest, you papish thief?"

"Only some linen."

Nanny fervently wished the assertion were true.

"We 'll soon know that;—open id, this moment;—ay, it 's the very chest we were tould to look for 'em in."

A pause ensued. Nanny then heard Nale say something in a growling accent, but his words escaped her; and then the old butler, speaking in a high voice, declared he had not the key, but would go to seek it.

It is in vain we have put down our pen in

the hope of selecting terms sufficiently forcible to describe Nanny's feelings, when she learned that the lid of her prison was to be raised, and her person revealed to view. It appeared evident that Bill Nale expected to find a treasure in the chest—and oh ! what would be his rage, when he should discover only a miserable, trembling old woman, upon whom, without this additional cause for revenge, but merely as punishment for again meeting her in the character and situation of a listener to his private discourse, he had sworn to inflict a horrid death—in fact, for well did Nanny remember his words—“the death of an ould cat?” And if ever an “ould cat,” past the days of forgiveness, felt beside herself with the terror of coming fate, when detected in the larder by the cook, devouring the rare mersel destined, above every thing else, to grace his master's table—if ever such poor offender gave herself up for lost, as the white-capped man of dishes, shutting the door behind him, entered just in time to scare her from the last mouthful of her meal—damning evidence of how the rest had been disposed of—and then, glaring alternately at the tell-tale fragment of the delicacy and at the detected glutton, advanced, knife in

hand, upon her—if, not daring to lick her lips in his presence, the cringing puss may be said to have experienced dreadful qualms of horror, more violent, even than her sensations, were at this moment those of the unfortunate Nanny.

She had raised herself, resting on one hand, to listen to the intruders. Now, with a very low but utterly despairing groan, she twisted her person around, sank on her knees and elbows, rested her teeming forehead on her death-cold hands, and—as she afterwards described it, when we questioned her on her state of mind during this severe trial—“her ould heart riz up to the root iv her tongue, an’ she could count every ugh, ugh, ugh, it gave there, as plain as that”—rapping her knuckles against a table—“an’ it went as fast too, my honey,”—and she repeated the knocks, about three to a second—“an’ it was the very most I could do to keep swallyin id down, or into the poor mouth o’ me it ’ud jump, purtect the hearers.”

“Listen, Sam,” said Rattling Bill, speaking, while the butler remained away, in his own undisguised voice, as he gave the chest a shake which caused the few articles of plate inside

to jingle, and sadly discomposed the position of the poor prisoner.

"By the deed, an' sure the lob is in id," answered Sam.

"What keeps ould Flannigan?" asked another voice, "hadn't we bettther break it open? The daylight 'ill soon be comin'."

"Did you tackle the horse an' cart, as I bid you, Sam?" questioned Nale.

"It's ready, upon my word."

"Well—the dawn is breakin', sure enough—an' it wouldn't do to be caught by the pikemen wid the King's coats on us," resumed Bill; "curse o' Cromwell on the day! where is id comin' so soon?—But bear a hand here, my hearties, an' we'll whip chest an' all away, hoize it on the cart in the yard, smash it to bits in some soft place, an' then ye may burn the *skeuchs** an' spill out the *murphies*† on silver dishes all the rest o' your lives."

"That's the plan o' plans, by the deed!" concurred Sam; "so, come."

The men surrounded the chest; and there was a general "here!" given, in that long cadence which is the signal for simultaneous ex-

* Osier strainers.

† Potatoes.

ertion. One end of it was raised, and Nanny slipped down to the other;—"here again!" the men piped, and she felt herself lifted up.

"It's mortal heavy," observed one.

"Hah!" laughed Nale, "that's the sign an' token that there's choicer stuff than feathers inside iv it. Listen again," as the plate continued to jingle; "there's nate music, I b'lieve—nater nor the best o' pipes ever played; 'silver an' goold to thee I give,' says the priest."—

The subdued laugh that followed this jocularity sounded at Nanny's ear as does the giggle of his torturer's to the benumbed yet terrified senses of the wretch who, in that not unreal state of suffering called night-mare, fancies himself gasping under the fantastic inflictions of a score of fiends.

As Sam had engaged, a cart and horse stood in the yard ready to receive the much-prized but ill-understood load. The groaning carriers laid their fardel on the cart; and Nanny judged, if judgment she could pretend to form, that a conversation ensued in very low tones between four persons. Then the cart went for some time rapidly along, over a rough road; and many a jolt did she get, and often

did her poor head come in rude contact with the sides and ends of her moving dungeon. Then she concluded that the way became still more difficult; for Nanny could feel that she travelled very slowly.

And during this slackened progress she caught—very unwillingly, for the first time in her life—the continuation of a dialogue held between Nale and Sam, as they sat at different sides of the chest, and spoke in loud accents over it. From the free and confidential manner in which they interchanged some important opinions and allusions, Nanny concluded that they were now alone with their prize, and alas! unsuspecting of the near espionage of that individual whom, above all that breathed, Nale had formerly seemed unwilling to admit into his secrets; and agony came with the thought, that this involuntary offence would surely add, at the proper moment, ruthless determination to Bill's revenge upon her person.

“By my deed an’ conscience!” said Sam, “it was the hoith o’ good loock that put him in your road.”

“Hah!—an’ never mind one me for not missin’ the wind fall. Never fear Bill Nale for makin’ his milch-cow o’ the rock o’ sense, as

people thinks Square Talbot to be. You know well, Sammy, we never want a shiner while his purse has a cross in id."

"Threw enough, Bill; but who'd think that he'd turn out sich a scape-grace, as well as sich a fool;—he that all the world, too, took for a civil, honest fellow intirely."

"By the livin' farmer! I couldn't think it of him myself, the first time I come across him;—an' it isn't all out plain to me that I didn't bite him, widout knowin' id, some day or other, since we happened to be such friends together."

"Bud, betuxt yourself an' myself, Billy, honey, isn't id a raal wondher, an' a thing widout sense in id, how he could go to turn hangman upon Square Hartley?"

"No wondher at all, though I won't deny you what you say about the sense o' the matter;—it's my notion he'd go, neck-an'-heels, into the roastin'-pit;—you know where I mane, or, at laste you'll know id one o' these days—bud I b'lieve he'd stand a week's fryin' in that place, jest to have a snile from Square Hartley's daughther the week afther; an' he couldn't get near her, by hook or by crook, while the father lived. Why, Sam, if you seen how he bounced up when I showed him my crans for

noosin' the old barrowknight;—though, by the piper! Sam, I never done a thing that went so hard against my grain as that; he was a raal gentleman, so he was;—bud, when the marriage come about, I couldn't do what I had to do any other way;—an' they have to blame themselves; I tould 'em to dhrop the business, an' they wouldn't."

"Who did you warn on the head iv id?"

"I sent a message to the daughtther hersef, by that ould Tory, Nanny the Knitther; bud it isn't clear to me that she said my words right fornent Miss Hartley;—no matther—wait till we do what's in hand, an' then, maybe, I'd clap my paw on the ould thramper."

Nanny felt no increase of comfort in her chest.

"An' you helped Square Talbot so bravely, Bill, to lock up the sweetheart at last?"

The listener experienced, for an instant, some little interest apart from her own absorbing situation.

"Yes, we done that for 'im, an' we done id hiansome; she went wid hearty good-will, thinkin', by the hokey frost! that she was goin' to meet the poor father;—bud she must thtravel a longer road afore she sees him agin."

“ An’ what road did she thravel that prasent time ?”

“ Jest to Square Talbot’s new house, that ’s near Dunbrody. You know id, Sam; it ’s on the hoight afore you cross the pill, goin’ to the ould abbey; an’ he’s only waitin’ till we have the mackerony iv a husband she got the other day berred snug in the little church; an’ then he’ll make her marry him, in spite iv all the world. Them women are the divils, out-an’-out, Sammy, an’ well I know id; there isn’t a livin’ man on Ireland’s ground able for Bill Nale; bud ever since the day he was born, one woman or another crowed over him; an’ I b’lieve that ’s a curosimy. First, there was the ould, cross-grained mother o’ me from the black North;—well, she went her road, an’ I thought I was a free man; but then, the duoul puts id into the proud heart o’ that great lady iv a wife I had to take a notion o’ me, an’ quit her father’s grand house on a pillion at my back, when you and I, Sam, forged the *rhaumaush* of a story about my gettin’ her from the fairies, that all the sensible neighbours gave ear to.”—

“ Yes, by my deed ! an’ a nate, pleasant story it was; bud her fine ladyship didn’t stick to you long, Billy, my boy.”

“By the hokey frost! Sam, she’s dhrivin’ me still,—or else another woman for her, an’ that’s all the same thing.”

“And nothin’ in the world ’ill do, Bill, bud to sthretch him in Dunbrody?”

“Nothin’; ’twas the first ordhers I got, as you ought to remember, Sam, by what you saw an’ hard the night big Father Rourke tuck him out iv our hands; an’, by the farmer! betther he doesn’t desarve, if it was only on account of his gettin’ clear o’ me so often. Why, only last night agin, Sam, we were cock-sure of him, when the girl let him out of Enniscorthy castle wid her own hands;—but *naubocklish*, I’ll pin him, an’ that soon, or I’m not Bill Nale; an’ so enough said.”

“Bud tell us, Bill, how is Hartley’s daughter to be brought to marry the man that sthrung up her father, an’ that’s to have a hand in murdherin her husband!”

“How the *duoul* does Bill Nale know? or what the *duoul* does Bill Nale care? It’s my own business I’m doin’, Sam Stick-leg, an’ not Square Talbot’s; though he’d swear to any one ’ud ax him that I was workin’ neck-or-nothin’ for him, an’ for nobody else:—well, see what fools there’s in the world; an’, in all my doins,

the biggest fools I ever met were ever an' always chaps like him, that thought they had a power o' sense in their heads: only for one thing I'd turn round on him, at the jingle of a purse, an' let poor Hartley's daughther have the sweet-heart she'd rather have; bud she must do wid-out him to plase one that, I tell you once agin, rules Bill Nale as hard as his ould cantankerous cripple iv a mother, or his mighty grand lady iv a wife ever did."

Nanny heard much more of the conversation of these worthies; and we had from her lips—for we found it impossible to stem her garrulity—materials sufficient to fill many additional pages; but we feel no wish to report the words of such a character as Rattling Bill Nale farther than is absolutely unavoidable.

For about an hour and a half Nanny continued to jolt along in her very uncomfortable vehicle; and although a great portion of the dialogue she overheard could not fail to impress itself upon her mind, still she never ceased to regard the unhappy circumstance of her being a listener to it as, using her own words, an additional "nail in her coffin;" and her whole journey was therefore spent in despairing anticipations of the fate which awaited her.

Three different ways she employed herself as the cart jogged and rattled over the broken road. With her ears she took in the terrific information it was none of her wish to acquire ; through her whole frame she shuddered at the inevitable death in store for her at the hands of a man who had proclaimed himself Sir William Judkin's murderer, and, almost in the same breath, marked her out as another sheep for the slaughter ; and during this mixture of listening, despairing, and chattering, her lips moved with all the rapid flippancy of long practice, and of her habitual gossiping, softly articulating, once and again, the round of prayers to which for a whole life they had been accustomed, and which they could pronounce, letter by letter, without much inconvenience to the agency of the mind, and indeed, with only a vague idea of devotion accompanying the process. More fervent, because more extemporaneous, ejaculations for mercy occasionally broke up, however, her parrot-like orisons, as some tremendous view of her doom caused her to give an extraordinary cringe, and more freely drove out the cold moisture through the pores of her fleshy forehead.

At length the cart halted. She would have preferred that it should jolt and shake her until doomsday. She and her encasement were gently shoved off the vehicle, and came with a shock to the ground; and then, scarce conscious, she expected the moment of her fate; yet, partly by an unwilling warping of her features, partly from an instinct that the most abject of all abject prayers for mercy was her sole hope, short of a miracle from above, Nanny lay, prepared for the rising of the lid, utter humility and penitence in her attitude and face, and the words of a heart-rending petition ready to burst from her lips, while the “ugh, ugh,” of her heart increased to a galloping vibration.

The lid, however, was not so quickly raised. She became half aware that an unexpected pause occurred between her and her last trial. Then the voices of Nale and Sam were distinguished by her ears, at first conveying no words to the failing sense; but gradually the poor Knitter rallied into sufficient self-possession to hear what follows:—

“They ought to be here wid the hommer by this time, if they come by the short cut.”

"Faix, an' so they ought—bad manners to 'em when they do come. An' I hope they'll meet their reward."

"What 's the rason you say that, Sammy?" questioned Nale, with a grin of intelligence.

"By the deed, how bad they are in want of silver dishes for their praties; it's a great sin to give sich dacent things into their paws, Bill Nale."

"*Naubocklish*, if we don't have the biggest share, Sam; supposin' 'em to the foure, you an' I, lad, must get the first haul."

"Yoursef, by coorse, Bill, afore me."

"Yes,—I think the first thing that's to be saized on, 'ill be Bill Nale's, any how."

"Ay, by the deed, to make pipe-stoppers of id, if you like."

All this was keen cutting to the poor "first thing that was to be saized on."

"Faix an' deed, an' we b'lieve this 'ill smash the thick schull of id, an' let us never mind the hommer," said Sam, approaching with a large stone between his hands: "there now," laying his burden on the chest, mounting after it, and again raising and poising it over the middle of the lid,—and certainly, had he let it drop, not only would the "schull," of the massive coffer

have been stove in, but the skull of our old friend along with it.

But Nale, casting his watchful eye to the brow of a neighbouring height, called out—

“Hould your hand, Sam; pitch it on the ground.”

The authoritative tone of his chief, Sam durst not disobey, and the stone was accordingly flung wide of the original mark. Nanny afterwards visited the spot, and found the huge piece of rock bedded deep in the soil; and the poor old woman knelt at its side, and offered up very fervent thanksgivings, that it had not descended as was at first planned; for, if it had, it must have “made poor ould Nanny, my honey, as flat as a pancake.”

“Stop, Sam; I see four or five pikemen crossin’ the ridge, on their way to the croppies’ camp, I`m thinkin’—jump down and hide here wid me; if they meet us in our yeoman clothes, we`re gone men.

The two rascals stooped on hands and knees by the side of the chest turned from the height. Nanny piously prayed that the croppy detachment might quickly descend to the by-road with good pikes in their hands. She was disappointed. Taking off his warlike helmet, and

using just one eye round the angle of her dungeon, Nale soon ascertained that the wandering peasants were passing out of view without having noticed the horse and cart, or the important article which lay near to both.

“ We must jest wait for the hommer afther all,” resumed Nale, when it was prudent to arise from his crouching position ; “ or folly me down here, for a start, Sam, an’ I’ll tell you more o’ the matther.”

Nanny heard them walk away, and the rest of their conversation was lost to her ear. But the reader may proceed after them a few steps to the brink of a sand-pit, and then down its abrupt side, until at the bottom of the excavation he hears Nale resume.

“ The morniu’ is too bright, Sam, to pull out the ould silver dishes in a place that many more people may soon cum upon. Besides, the young schamp I want to lay hould on is gone to Emmiscorthy town, an’ I must obey ordhers, and be off to keep an eye on him—an’ more be token agin, you must dhrive the horse an’ cart towards Dunbrody wid this other little thrunk, in no time, as I tould you last night—don’t daare to look glum at me now,

bud listen how it 'ill be. You see this hole—pointing almost to his feet—“where the great lob o' pikes were put to hide, afore the risin'; we'll jest shuv the chest down here, an' cover id wid the sand, an' when the night falls agin, we'll come back an' smash it, betuxt ourselves, nate an' quiet; an' when Morrissy an' Redmond walks this way wid the hommer, expectin' their share, why they can have what the cat left o' the bacon, you know. So help a hand, Sammy, an' none o' your foolish looks, I bid yon.”

Nanny soon caught their returning steps. Then she became aware that, with much labour and difficulty, they dragged her and her prison some little distance forward; and then, as they allowed their lumber to find its own way to the bottom of the pit, it was well for her that it had been massively constructed, and bound with iron plates at the corners, or surely it must have burst open from the violence of its abrupt descent; and it was likewise fortunate for Nanny that she had little room to jolt from one end to the other; for, although occupying nearly the whole extent of her dark dungeon, her head and her foxy hat struck so

smartly against the end which first rushed downward, that consciousness momentarily departed from her.

She regained her senses at experiencing a second terrible shock through her entire frame, caused by the sudden lowering of the chest into the deep hole to which, until the return of night, Nale had destined it. Not having heard the last communication between the two knaves, she could not remotely calculate the nature of her late hideous evolutions. In vague horror, alone, she remained just sensible of a sudden plunge from the surface of the earth; but whither, or for what purpose, was impervious and astounding mystery; for aught she could tell, the earth might have opened and swallowed her, a thousand fathom deep, or she might have fallen from its verge into the terrors of the other world.

But, after rallying her powers of observation, she soon decided that nothing so very fearful had happened to her. A dripping, grating noise sounded on the lid of—it may now be called, her coffin—and once more she heard Nale saying, “A little ’ill do, Sam; jest as mooch as hides the top, an’ then these bushes

an' briars 'ill keep it berred as snug as my ould granmammy."

"Berred!"—cogitated Nanny.

"There," he continued, and the noise of throwing the sand upon her ceased—"there; that's clane an' purty;—an' now come, Sam, an' we can make out a hommer for ourselves."

They left her, already stifling and gasping, to decide which death she would choose, suffocation in her premature grave, or braining with the hammer, if indeed she outlived their return, short as must be the time she concluded they would stay away. And no doubt poor Nanny's sufferings had soon ended in the manner first mentioned, but for a providential and yet only natural interference.

Redmond and Morissy, the two associates despatched by Nalc from Hartley Court, to provide the heavy hammer for breaking open the chest, were not without their doubts of his intentions to deal fairly by them. Bill's well-known, and indeed undisguised, character warranted such suspicions; and the men came to positive conclusions when he directed them to proceed to a certain spot, by a route different from that he proposed to take himself, with

the horse and cart. His pointing it out as a short cut did not allay their fears of his consummate knavery and selfishness. They communicated their ideas to each other, and resolved upon a counter-plot. Leaving him, in seeming willingness to procure the sledge, they returned quickly in his track, dogged the horse and cart stealthily during its whole journey, concealed themselves when it halted, overheard the treacherous conversation about themselves between Bill and Sam "with the stick-leg," (the only name or appellation we could discover as attaching to that very doubtful individual,) watched the subsequent proceedings of the worthies, and, the moment they were fairly out of view after interring Nanny, the men came forward, one of them at least determined to act a brave part.

Having previously arranged in their place of concealment, to go to work promptly, they scrambled in silence down the steep pit, and began to remove, without speaking a word, the bushes and sand from the lid of the chest. The poor buried alive was recalled, by the noise, to the exercise of nearly the last mental observation she remained capable of making. She lay on her knees and elbows, her mouth

open, and her head moving up and down to every painful gasp of the thick air which she laboured to force through her lungs. But although the noise slightly restored her to a sense of existence, it by no means communicated a hope that existence was to be prolonged a single instant after the opening of her coffin; for Nanny believed she was still in the hands of her cruel enemy. Heavy blows succeeded to the former scraping and shuffling over her head, each skilfully directed by Dick Redmond, so as to force the lid upwards: they were successful; it half opened; there was a rush of warm vapour from within, and a rush of pure atmosphere from without, of which Nanny took a long, renovating draught; but with her rallied feeling of life came instantaneously her horror of what she had at last to encounter; and in the useless instinct of avoiding the eye of her executioner, she quickly resumed her squatted position, and drew her head as closely to her body as she could,—the head of her cloke slipping, with the long-practised jerk, over her ears,—as the tortoise, which in her present attitude she much resembled, will, in case of attack, draw the most exposed part of his body under his shell.

“ Now for id, Daniel, my daisy,” cried Dick Redmond, as in high spirits he flung wide the lid of the chest. Nanny heard him not. He peeped in—he opened his eyes: he stared again; but could not attach any certain idea of form or of nature to the object that met his view. Daniel, who all along had been suffering under the fear of Bill Nale’s future wrath on account of the course he dared to pursue in this adventure, and whose misgiving heart finally relinquished every hope of escaping detection by a man he believed well-known to the devil, if he was not the devil himself;—Daniel remained rather in the background; his tremours only relieved by a covetous anticipation of the sweet jingling sounds that he concluded were to meet his ear, and the shining and splendid treasures that he thought were to dazzle his eye.

“ Is there mooch ?” he timidly asked, while his companion still stared into the chest.

“ Sing toi, oi, fiddle-dee, toi, i, ee.

“ Hah, hah, hah, fol, dhe-too-rol-lee !”

answered his more vivacious comrade, singing the chorus of a merry song, of which each verse presented some droll idea, subsequently enjoyed in the “ hah, hah, hah !”

“Don’t let the soighth iv id make you take lave o’ your senses, Dick,” resumed Daniel, now advancing.

“Well, there’s no use in talkin’, Bill Nale,” Diek went on; “you *are* the biggest rogue that ever was hanged; if this is not makin’ gandhers iv us, divil a gandher in the world, but all grey geese;” and Redmond seemed highly to enjoy the supposed jest.

“Arrah, what’s come over you?” questioned the serious Daniel Morrissy.

“Musha, Daniel, my poor fellow, however the duoul he done id, Rattlin’ Bill Nale dhrew every bit o’ the threasure through the boards o’ the chest, either while we turned off a minute or so, purtendin to go for the hommer, or at the very time we thought we were watchin’ him along the road—by coorse, the bouchal had the kay unknownst to any body—an’ see here—here’s what he laves for yourself and myself—a bundle iv ould rags, not worth a Keenogue; an’ all the time he an’ Sam talked iv ehatin us, they knew we were widin hearin’, an’ the whole o’ that talk was jest to make us think they left the threasure behind ’em. Well, Bill, you’re a deary iv a bird.”

“Bud isn’t id like an ould bag o’ blue cloth?”

asked Daniel, at length peering in; “an maybe the goold an’ silver is inside iv ~~the~~”

“By gonnies, maybe so! thry.”

Daniel cautiously laid his hand on our still crouching friend; she gave a painful moan, and feebly moved her head.

“Oh-a—oh-a! what the duoul is that?” cried Daniel, jumping backward.

“What! did the bag bite you?”

“It’s alive—it’s himself is in id, I b’lieve, whispered the superstitious fellow.

“Who?—Nale?”

“Yes, his ownself; it’s as likely as any.”

“Bother, Daniel,” laughed Dick; “bud stop—supposin’ it is, I’ll see how he’ll take a clipe o’ this hommer by way o’ payment for chatin us;” and he stepped to the chest.

“I’m a poor ould lump iv a sinner, my honey pet,” petitioned Nanny, with a face of the most wretched intreaty that ever sinner wore, as she was raised from her position of terror and vain concealment by the athletic arms of Dick Redmond—“I’m a poor ould lump iv a sinner, my honey pet,” she repeated, still imagining she addressed another person,—“an’ may the marcies meet your darlin’ sowsls in glory above, an’ give marcy

to ould Nanny this day—may loock an' grace come peltin' an' powrin in your road every day you get up from your bed; may hard fort'n be broke afore* you—an' may riches galore* be rainin' on you, till you won't know what to do wid id!"—

"Why, then, tundher-an'-bloody-wars!" cried Dick Redmond, utterly amazed,—nay, very nearly frightened as he looked into the agonized face he held up to his own view,—“an' is this you, ould Nanny the Knitther?”—

“Ah, then it is, God help me!” she answered, in a voice wonderfully changed and assured at the blessed conviction that she was not in the gripe of her persecutor; and now, Nanny had got on “her hunkers,” and, with her hands closely clasped, waved from side to side, —“an' thanks for ever be to the holy Name, isn't id the honey darlin' Dick Redmund I'm spakin to?”—

An explanation ensued. Dick relished the joke exceedingly.

“An' by rason you once sthrove to get me a good wife, ould Nanny—'twas no fault o' your's that she turned out contrhary—you done your best—I'll help you out o' your coff'n,

* In abundance.

afore Bill Nale comes back—there,” placing her on the ground—“an’ taste this, to rise your heart,”—administering some whiskey out of a small viol—“an’ now, run for your life while your legs ’ill last.”

Nanny acted on the advice as strenuously as she was able. In pity to the old creature, Dick assisted her up to the edge of the sand-pit.

“Good bye, my honey pet, an’ the Lord grant you your reward in glory for ever, amin,—an’ my honey, Dick Redmoud, when you come across him, there’ll be no use in tellin’ him what kind iv a load he had the throuble o’ carryin’ so far.”

“Never fear, Nanny—say nothin’ about us, an’ we’ll say nothin’ about you—it’s the best play to keep sacrets on both sides—an’ so, take your heels while you can.”

Though much bruised and battered, as well as exhausted, the rejoicing dame literally set forward at a pace between a trot and an amble, Dick shouting after her—

“Run, your sowl, run! he’s afther you! he’ll have you if you don’t put the stumps to the best o’ their knowledge!”—

But little additional exhortation was required

to keep Nanny at her utmost speed in an effort to remove, as far as possible, from the scene of her direful troubles. Mumbling thanksgivings at every step, she panted and perspired along ; and, at the very first opportunity, turned off the road, and made her way over intricate paths, and through the most lonesome places, towards a friend's cabin—the nearest at hand, no matter which—for where was the cabin under whose humble roof Nanny had not a friend ?

The house of refuge appeared in view. She slackened her pace, drew breath, and began somewhat distinctly to cogitate. Now that her own life seemed respited at least, if not quite in her possession, thoughts of the information, as to the fate of “ Lady Elceezabeth Judkin, barrowknight,” gleaned from the conversation of Nalc and his associate, arose in her mind, and with them a really disinterested anxiety to succour her captive patroness. “ The honey Sir William, too !” must she not exert herself to save him from the terrible fate with which he was threatened ?—Doubtless, the danger of “ makin’ or meddlin’,” was great ; it seemed little less than wilfully precipitating herself into some dilemma as fearful, and perhaps more fatal, than that from which she had just escaped. But suffering

seemed to make Nanny's heart magnanimous. "What good was her ould end of a life," when put in competition with that of her beloved young "bennyfather," and Sir William Judkin? God would guard her—or, if it was "the holy an' blessed Will" that she must suffer, "why, then"—and tears of sympathy with her kind, and even with her own forgotten nature, purer than for twenty years she had shed, obscured the old woman's eyes,—“why, then, Nanny's part 'ill be gone through, an' that's all.”

The result of her determination will be found developed in a future chapter.

CHAPTER IV

WHILE Nanny arranges her plans, we are at liberty to visit our heroine in the house to which, as we have learned, through the Knitter's agency, from Bill Nale's conversation with his worthy confidant, Captain Talbot had caused her to be conveyed. Indeed, it seems our duty to accompany her thither;—nay, recollecting the imperfect accounts of her motions supplied to Sir William Judkin, first by “the poor girl wid the good karaethers,” and next by Miss Alicia Hartley, a plain detail of all her adventures, from the moment she left her father's mansion, immediately after her marriage, is called for at our hands.

Until that day, Eliza Hartley—as, notwithstanding her increased consequence in the world, we shall, with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, continue to call her—until that day, Eliza Hartley had never known real sorrow. Beloved

one hour she passed out of the playfulness almost of childhood into the steady energy of a woman, who, for the sake of those that loved her, and that she loved in return, was prepared to dare much without fear, and to suffer all without repining.

Having dried her vain tears, and put off her, as vain, bridal garments, the first impression of her now thoughtful mind convinced her that the preliminary step to any effort she might be called on to make, ought to consist in seeking a conference with her father and her husband. With a deep composure, which surprised all around her, she bade adieu to her bridesmaids, ordered her carriage to the door, and preceded by her aunt, who involuntarily acknowledging her right to act, and her power to protect, petitioned not to be left behind, Eliza slowly ascended the step, and desired to be driven to the castle of Enniscorthy.

It did not occur to her that she might be refused admittance. Hitherto, wherever she had gone, Eliza had found officious cagerness smoothing the way before her. The carriage stopped before the entrance-gate of the temporary prison; she dismounted, and requesting her aunt to wait for her return, drew her veil

over her face, in order to disguise it from the bold stare of a group of yemen assembled near at hand. Not thinking it necessary to ask permission to pass, she was entering the gate, when the rude and ill-clad sentinel, lowering his rusty musket and bayonet, abruptly demanded, "Who are you, an' where are you dhrivin?"

She stepped back, shocked at the interruption. It was the first rudeness that had ever been offered to her. But the quickly curbed tears which started to her eyes did not spring from mortified vanity; their source lay higher, in the apprehension, that from those whom she came to serve, and whom she felt she could serve, her presence was interdicted.

Regaining her carriage, and taking a moment to think, Eliza spoke from the window, desiring that some officer who had authority to admit her might be sent out. The sentinel took no notice whatever of her request, or rather command, and the unoccupied band of yemen only stared more boldly than before, some of them leering and winking on each other. With mock respect in his tone and manner, one of them at length answered that her ladyship's orders should be obeyed: in consequence of his

delivery of the message inside, an officer advanced, however, to the carriage, and Eliza shrank back in horror and despair, when in that officer she recognized Talbot. His step was not firm, his lips were white, his eyes quailed even beneath her veiled glance, with, as Eliza believed, the cowardice of conscious guilt.

“I have the honour to await your commands, Madam,” he said, after standing some time unnoticed by her at the door of the carriage.

“I understand, Sir,” she forced herself to reply, “that I must demand permission from some one in authority to go in to see my father and my husband.”

“It is indeed necessary that you should do so, Madam,” he answered, in a calmer voice than that in which he had at first spoken; as if the hauteur of her address had brought back the unwincing sternness of his nature.

“Then, Sir, please to order yonder saucy fellow to let me pass.”

“I regret, Madam, that your wish cannot be complied with.”

“What, Sir!”—and she started up from her leaning position in undisguised terror,—“are Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin to

be shut up from the visits of the daughter and the wife?"

"Yes, Madam; such must be the case."

"Impossible, Sir!—send your commanding-officer hither."

"Excuse me, Madam,—but, in this instance, there is no one to contravene my orders."

"Your orders, Sir!—and these inhuman orders emanate from you!"

"They are my orders, Madam."

"God help me, then!—and God help the poor prisoners left at your mercy!"—She again sank back in an agony of despair, and, covering her face with her hands, deep and long moans escaped her.

Captain Talbot seemed suddenly touched;—he trembled;—he approached closer to the window, and, in a faltering voice, too low to be heard by Miss Alice, said—

"Oh! why have you not come alone?—why, this moment, can we not speak fully together?—Eliza! beloved Eliza!"

She interrupted him;—starting as if an adder had whispered at her ear, and flung back her veil, that, with an eye authoritative and stern, and now not moist with a single tear, she might regard him.

“Wretch!—wretch, as well as villain, leave my sight!”

He stood irresolutely. She peremptorily waved her hand, repeating—“Begone—begone!” He was about to obey, apparently shrinking from her presence.

“Stop, Captain Talbot!” cried the weeping Miss Alice. Eliza again hid her face, but she did not interrupt her aunt. Although, in her present mood, she could not bend her own outraged spirit to sue to Talbot, the object to be prayed for was worth some humiliation.

“Oh! Captain Talbot,” petitioned the sobbing old lady, clasping her hands together, “surely you will not be so cruel as to refuse us this favour? I know, I know you will not—you will have pity on us—us, two ladies whom you often sat with at the fireside, and who are as unused to beg any favour, as they are unable to bear the great misery that now visits them. Oh! take our thanks, our hearts’ thanks, and admit us to comfort the poor prisoners!”

Eliza slowly let her hands fall, and gazed upon her former lover, to note the effect of this appeal in his features. But his brow only seemed knit into its purpose; all his former

apparent vacillation was gone, and he carelessly, but steadily, replied—

“Madam, I can only repeat the regret I feel, that duty obliges me to—”

“Drive to the inn!” cried Eliza, again interrupting him. As the carriage turned away, he bowed profoundly, and quickly re-entered the gate.

For a time, Eliza’s pride, energy, hope, and resolution, quite failed her, and, on the way to the inn, she indulged, along with her aunt, in a shower of bitter tears. Agony and despair rent her bosom. She had felt, and she continued to feel within her, a resolution to brave any danger in the performance of whatever effort her husband and her father might suggest as necessary to their safety; but that, by this refusal to admit her to their presence, she could not direct her zeal, her devotion, and her firmness, upon any course of which they might approve, or which might be beneficial, was an overwhelming thought. And her feelings gained their height, when she farther reflected on the nature of the charge under which her father and her husband had been imprisoned;—on the fate that awaited them if that charge could be established; or,

amid the blind fury of the time, even made to look plausible; on the promptitude with which punishment would follow conviction; and, above all, on the ominous success which had so far attended their enemy's measures, and which, calculating by the power he seemed to wield, and the savage determination he still evinced, appeared but a presage of his complete triumph, and of Eliza's utter misery.

Gaining the inn, while filled with these thoughts, it was only natural that, strong in previous energy and resolution, as we have described her to have been, Eliza should sink, momentarily overpowered, by the woman's fears and pangs for those she loved, and by profound despair on her own account.

Miss Alicia, although in the first instance helplessly overpowered, wanted, luckily for herself, the ardency of feeling that makes a wreck of the youthful bosom; for, with the decay of physical capacity to struggle, Nature deadens the susceptibilities of age. Keeping up, therefore, only her strain of impotent lamentation, she could now administer some necessary comfort to her almost insensible niece; and in this view she rang the bell, when the girl "wid the good karacters" answered it.

About twilight, having often and vainly sent in the meantime to gather intelligence of the proceedings at the castle, Eliza was roused from her despondency, by the intelligence that a person wished to speak with her on important business. The only important business concerning which, in her mind, any one could desire an interview, must refer to the situation of her father and her husband; and she accordingly desired the visitor to be admitted.

A woman of tall stature, muffled and hooded in the common Irish mantle, but not more carefully or remarkably than it is often worn, entered the chamber, and stopping almost at the threshold, addressed our heroine in a low, controlled voice.

“You are the daughter of Sir Thomas Hartley?”

“I am.” Eliza could utter no more, for the solemnity of the stranger, in deportment as well as in accent, although her face did not become discernible, conveyed anticipations of sad tidings to be spoken.

“I would converse with you, Madam,” continued the woman impressively.

“Begin then.”

“Alone.”

"This lady is my aunt," said Eliza.

"It matters not; no third person must share our interview, and the business I come to communicate requires immediate attention, Madam."

"Indeed, my good woman," pleaded Miss Alicia, "if you come to say any thing concerning the dear prisoners at the castle, it will be cruelty to exclude me from the conversation."

"You judge correctly, Madam; my communication relates to them, but only to Miss Hartley can it be made; you may hear it from her, not from me: such are my directions, and I cannot and will not permit an exception."

"Are you aware that I am Sir Thomas Hartley's sister?"

"Yes, Madam, but that is nothing to the purpose. I perceive your niece grows uneasy at our delay,—please to leave us together."

"Do so, dearest aunt, for indeed I am on the rack to learn what this woman has to say to me."

"You will not exclude me long?" again petitioned Miss Alicia.

"Only so long as is absolutely necessary for the punctual delivery of my commission, Madam; I am as anxious as you can be to have the matter over, for pressing affairs call me to another place."

Miss Alicia retired, but only to the next apartment; and there, strong were her yearnings to listen at the door to the discourse in which she ~~had~~ been denied a share; but her high and pure sense of honour struggled with her feminine, and, under her circumstances, almost allowable curiosity, and finally she rejected the temptation.

It would have done her no good had she yielded, however; for, the moment she passed out of the chamber, the woman latched and bolted the door, and, stepping somewhat nearer to Eliza, held out a letter in her hand, as she said—

“This, Madam, is for you, and from your father.”

“From my father!” cried Eliza, snatching it, her whole attention diverted from the person of the bearer.

“Even so, Madam. It may seem strange in your eyes that a person of my appearance should be employed to hand you so important a document—one, indeed, upon the safe conveyance of which you will learn much depends; but, in the present times, the person least likely to be suspected was the most proper to be chosen, and I am therefore its bearer. Read it, Madam,

and read it quickly ; turn round to the window, and there is yet daylight enough for the perusal —time will be lost by calling for candles.”

Eliza quickly adopted the hint, and with all the eagerness of hope and fear ran over the contents of the epistle, which were as follows :—

“ MY DEAREST CHILD,

“ I find that a deeply laid plan has for some time been preparing, chiefly by one desperate individual, to get up some plausible evidence of a connexion between me and the insurgents, in order that I may be dealt with as a traitor to the State ; and I fear too, my dearest Eliza, that from the short time allowed me for my defence, as well as from the fact that I have to encounter private malignity at the hands of every one around me, it will be impossible to establish my innocence of the unfounded charge.

“ But check your rising terrors. I would not so abruptly communicate this intelligence, did I think that the results were to be fatal to me. Let me assure you, that except a temporary shade upon my character, and a short separation from you, I have really nothing to fear. My arbitrary judges may indeed declare me guilty, and more, may sentence me

to death, but their sentence will not be executed upon your father. I am positively certain of escaping it. From them indeed, or from one of their party, I expect no mercy ; but Almighty Providence, the friend of the innocent, has raised up a champion for us in our great trouble, Eliza. We are to be saved—you as well as I—(and you from worse than the fate to which I am nominally doomed,) by a person, the last upon earth we could have calculated on for such a service. I cannot venture to insert his name ; for if I did, and if my note miscarried, his destruction as well as mine were inevitable. Enough, that I fully and tranquilly depend not only upon his friendship, but upon the plans he has formed for my safety. This night I shall be freed from prison, and before the morning dawns shall be in a place of concealment beyond the reach of my enemies, where I am to remain only while our friend causes powerful application to be made to Government for a speedy reversal of my sentence ; then, my character justified, and my person safe, I can resume my station in society.

“ Now, attend, Eliza. All this is not only possible, but certain, provided you unhesitatingly adopt a specific advice, which I am about

to offer you :—decline that advice, or even dally with it, and our ruin is not less certain. But, first, a few words of explanation.

“ I have said that you also were threatened with a terrible fate—one more terrible than that prepared for me. This is but too true. It has been attempted to seduce you to—I will not—cannot write any more positive allusion to the diabolical matter ; and even prudence again reminds me that, for a reason before given, I had better not do so. But credit the solemn words of your father, uttered on no light grounds. Destruction surrounds you in your present unprotected situation ;—avoid it—fly from it, instantly and without hesitation—that is the advice I said I would give. Prepare to escape privately from Eunniscorthy, this very night, to an asylum which is ready to receive you. And now let me add why your father’s safety depends on the decision you make. If you hesitate to obey me, I must, after my escape from prison, remain, at all hazards, to watch over you, and, as long as I may be allowed to discharge the duty, shield you from the demon who would destroy my precious Eliza ; this will almost certainly cause my apprehension, and then indeed hope were gone

for ever. Obey me, therefore, for both our sakes; I use the strongest terms of command, because none others will convey my urgency; nor do I yet deem, Eliza, that I have forfeited over my child the authority of a parent.

“ Prepare yourself, I can only repeat, and freely trust yourself into the hands of those whom I shall send to guide your flight. After you leave Enniscorthy some distance behind, I will myself meet and accompany you to your journey’s end, disguised however from the view of a strange man who is to lead us by lonesome ways with which I am unacquainted, and to whom, as he does not share my confidence, it might be fatal to give the slightest suspicion of my identity. Farther, prudence, and the important results which are at stake, will oblige us to interchange few words on the road, and those in whispers;—nay, I must even try to assume a feigned voice, lest the man may be acquainted with my usual accents. In the minutest particular, caution is indispensable—for, recollect how much depends upon perhaps our least action! Your happiness—honour—life—the life of your father, and (I should have considered it before my own) that of the noble-hearted friend who dares all to succour and save us!

“ I must not conclude without another injunction. This communication is to be kept strictly secret from your poor aunt ; nor must she know of your arrangements for leaving Enniscorthy, nor that you are to leave it. She might fall into the hands of your enemy, and, in her present distressed and enfeebled state, drop some one word that were sufficient to re-transfer us all to the fate we try to avoid : and besides, she could not endure the fatigue for which you are better able to nerve yourself. Farewell, my dearest Eliza !—The bearer is fully in my confidence, — Farewell ! — May the Almighty Father protect the dear child of the fond and anxious

T. H.”

Shivering terror, astonishment, joy, hope, doubt—every variety of feeling, appeared by turns on Eliza’s brow, as she perused this epistle. She laid it on the old-fashioned seat of the window ; she put her hands upon her eyes—the woman saw her start expressively : again she examined the writing ; it surely was her father’s hand—less distinct and elegant, indeed, than that to which she had been accustomed ; but hurry and agitation might account

for the difference. She hastily read the letter a second time, and doubted more strongly than before : she could not tell why, but, to her mind, a certain unauthentic strain ran through it ; and Eliza felt inclined to refuse assent, or even consideration, to the extraordinary propositions it contained.

But chilly alarm possessed her at the reflection that still it might have been written by her father ; and if so—and if she hesitated to obey its commands !—Eliza sank overpowered at the thought. A third time she took it up. Now she had little or no doubt of the hand, and the diction and style seemed less strange. She looked towards the bearer of the important writing. The woman had resumed her station at the door, and Eliza could see nothing of her person and features, enveloped as both still were in her ample cloke, and farther obscured by the deepening twilight. It occurred to her to ask her visitor to put down the hood of the mantle, but good feeling checked the impulse ; and indeed good sense too ; for, if the letter were genuine, its bearer must be trust-worthy, inasmuch as the writer had said she fully possessed his confidence.

CHAPTER V.

HER aunt did not give Eliza much time for solitary reflection : and her question of—" Well, dear child, what—what have been the tidings ?" proposed a difficulty. During our heroine's whole life, she had never spoken an equivocation ; and little praise is claimed for her on that account, for she had never had any thing to conceal from the indulgent and virtuous friends about her ;—the fact is mentioned merely to show, that by habit as well, we hope, as by nature, she must now have utterly rejected the notion of deceiving her aunt with the " some probable story," just recommended to her adoption. Nor could she be silent ; and how, then, answer ?—" Plainly," concluded Eliza ; and referring to her father's letter, or to the letter that purported to come from her father, she read out that single injunction, which com-

manded her not to communicate to Miss Alice the intelligence it contained.

The old lady was of course much surprised, and startled, and grieved, and afraid. "What could be her brother's motive for refusing his confidence, in misfortune, to one from whom, in days of happiness, he had never withheld it?—her dear child would at least explain that."

No—because by so doing she must absolutely reveal the nature of the secret deposited exclusively in her breast.—"Very extraordinary still; unkind, cruel of Sir Thomas. Well,—but what, generally speaking, were the situation and the hopes of the poor prisoners?"—Their situation not dangerous, and their hopes lively.—"Praised be the Lord;—oh, for ever praised:" and the good lady knelt down, in the sincere fervency of her heart;—"and Sir Thomas's letter answered for the dear Sir William as well as for himself?"—Not so—but another letter did; and Eliza handed the pencilled note to Miss Alicia.

This partial confidence, slight as it really was, operated upon the querulous old lady as does, upon a fretful child, the permission to catch up some plaything of little moment, instead of the valuable article for which he had at first raised his tiny cries. While dwelling,

word after word, upon Sir William's scrawl, Miss Alice forgot how ill she had been treated by the withholding the more important document from her scrutiny. Her heart swelled with pity, admiration, and love of the writer. "The considerate, the fond, the gallant Sir William ! how her soul thanked him for the comfort of that little note ! But—Heaven, in its mercies, protect us !—could it, and Sir Thomas's letter too, have been written only to give assurance to Eliza and herself ?—could the dear prisoners, in compassion for them, agree to communicate hopes that had no real foundation ?"—Eliza, at much length, combatted the unreasonableness, as well as the refined misery-seeking of this conjecture. "Well ; thank God, her darling child thought so ; 'twas a great blessing that such was her opinion : but, again—and she prayed a good Providence to prove her fears vain—might not Sir Thomas's letter be a forgery ? Nay, even this note."—She drew near to the lights, and, adjusting her spectacles, re-examined the pencilled lines—"they were just like Sir William's hand, and no more—just as like as a skilful knave could easily make them ;—blessed Goodness ! was her dear child quite, quite sure of the handwriting of the letter ?"

This surmise and question proved more distressing to Eliza than any of the preceding ones had done; yet she answered, that, indeed, she had very carefully scrutinized the letter, and her conviction was that it must be genuine. As to Sir William's note, she entertained not the slightest doubt of it; his hand was a very peculiar one, and could not possibly be imitated, so as to deceive her at least; and, in fact, her dear aunt unnecessarily afflicted herself by such surmises;—"and now, dearest Madam," continued Eliza, "I will retire for a little while to reflect and to pray; for I need the most cool exercise of my mind, and the most merciful help Heaven may be pleased to vouchsafe me:" and accordingly she left the chamber, and in solitude endeavoured to form, positively, her determination.

"The one desperate individual" who had plotted against her father's life, could be no other than the "enemy" who had also sought her destruction—who, in fact, in order to get her into his power, had diabolically contrived the arrest of Sir Thomas and of her husband—"but," said Eliza, detecting herself arguing in a circle, "if I take any assertion from that letter, so as to reason on it, I must first suppose the epistle genuine, and then my dilemma would end

at once : and, hold—do I not here see started the strongest possible reason to believe it written by my father? If a forgery, it can have been forged only by that “one desperate individual,” that detestable “enemy,” and would he thus describe himself?”

She started up, delighted at the thought. Joined to its other internal evidence, there could no longer be a doubt of the authenticity of the letter. She would, without farther hesitation,—nay, in hope and joy of heart, act upon it.

“And yet,” still whispered her womanly prudence and fears—“a consummate villain would hit even upon that finesse, in order to make it look more like the truth—in order to secure his one long-sought object, for which he has already bid adieu to character in every shape, in order”—and she dropped trembling into her chair—“in order to beguile a wretched woman, far from her protectors, and from all human help!”

For some time Eliza could but shudder and shrink at the bare idea of committing herself to the guidance of the questionable person who had delivered the letter, and hasten, at an advanced hour of the night, most probably, into the very arms of destruction.

“But here is the awful question,” she con-

tinued, laying down the document after she had again pored over it—"the probabilities, whether it be genuine or not, are pretty nearly equal: the life of my father *may*, then, be in my hands; and should I hesitate? If, through my selfish fears, the beloved author of my existence were again to fall into his enemies' grasp, could peace of mind ever visit me? Must I not regard myself as that coward daughter who feared to risk a chance of personal injury for the equal chance of saving her father? Oh, God!" she cried, falling on her knees, and stretching her arms towards Heaven, while the ennobling nature of the struggle, and the deep-felt reliance upon Him whom she supplicated, gave a holy expression to her beautiful features—"Father of All, guide my feeble reason, enlighten my imperfect nature, raise my selfish heart, that, in this first necessity for a proper exercise of my judgment, I may decide as thou wouldst have me do!"

Covering her face with her hands, she bent humbly before the Great Power she invoked, and for some time remained silently in that position. When she arose and seated herself, her countenance, though pale, was calm and firm; and not without a mild-glow of joyfulness, she

felt as if the Mighty Intelligence, of which her soul was an emanation, had been present to it, and imparted the power to decide: and as persons will do in solitude, who have come to a fixed resolution, after a strong mental combat, Eliza breathed out her purpose aloud. "The risk shall be run. His arm will shield, even amid danger, the child who would save her father. In the name of God, let me prepare for my journey! It cannot lead me into harm. And now I do not fear my enemy. There is a strength given to me beyond his strength. Either we are not to meet at all, or I shall overcome him if we do."

Wearing a brow of steady resolve, she joined her aunt, and spent nearly the two succeeding hours in endeavouring to inspire the feeble old lady with hope and confidence. Meantime, to say that, even after all her high-minded determination, her own bosom remained unagitated by relapsing doubts and fears, would be to exaggerate Eliza into a commonplace heroine indeed.

About half-past nine o'clock, an account of the result of her father's trial was brought to her by a messenger sent from the inn. Sentence of death had been recorded against

him. Hesitation once more passed away. She would dare every thing for the merest chance of warding off the execution of that sentence.

Of the going or coming of the particular person who conveyed these tidings, Miss Alicia had been unaware: Eliza privately employed him, and as privately met him upon his return from the castle; so that her aunt could ask no questions concerning whatever intelligence he might communicate. To other individuals dispatched with the knowledge of the old lady, her niece now sent orders not to approach the inn. And as she sat at the side of the bed where poor Miss Alice at length lay powerless, her feeble eyes closing in slumber which she vainly resisted, and presently opening to inquire if the messenger had returned, Eliza was thus enabled to withhold information that, while she cherished a hope it might prove harmless, she feared could not at present be given to her aunt, without endangering her life.

Eliza stealthily looked at her watch. It wanted but a few minutes to ten. Finding her heart sinking, she once more knelt, and once more gained resolution. Still on her knees, she softly took her aunt's languid hand, and kissed

it ; and then arose, and cautiously bent over the bed to regard the long-loved features which she might never again behold. Miss Alicia slumbered, but as Eliza a second time impulsively caught up her hand, awoke, and their eyes met.

“ I hope you feel sufficiently warm, my dearest aunt,” she said, in a choking voice, while she ardently pressed the hand she held. Miss Alicia’s reply was scarcely audible, yet it spoke gratitude and assurance, and her weak fingers feebly returned the pressure of which they were just sensible. Her eyes closed again. Eliza stole out of the chamber, gained her own, and hastily proceeded to array herself for her perilous journey.

A riding-habit formed no part of the attire she had brought with her from Hartley Court ; but she could clothe herself warmly, and not very inconveniently. As the last article of dress was arranged, the clock on the lobby began to strike ten. Again she looked at her watch ; it also indicated the momentous hour. Instinctively she pressed her right-hand to her heart, while yet the strokes rung on, and turning round faced the closed door of her chamber. The tenth stroke had scarcely been told, when it was followed by a single heavy knock at the outside of

the door. She started, caught her breath shortly ; but, after a pause, desired the challenger to come in.

“ ’Tis I ; come you out to me,” answered the low voice of her former visitor.

At once closing with her purpose, boldly and courageously, Eliza opened the door, and saw the woman standing in the gloom at the head of the stair. Eliza held a light in her hand.

“ Leave the candle in the room, it may draw observation ; and then come closer here, while we exchange a word.”

Eliza passively obeyed these directions.

“ By your preparations for the road, I see you have not altered your mind,” continued the woman, when they stood together at the stair-head in the dark.

“ I have not,” replied Eliza firmly—“ lead on, I follow you ; if I am betrayed, Heaven will punish my betrayers.”

A slight scoffing sound, made by the breath, escaped the woman before she continued ;—
“ You have nothing to fear ; act resolutely, and you will bless the night I led you from this roof. I even bring you assurances of my honesty. What words are these ?—‘ God bless you ! my love, and may you live to bless the

husband of your choice longer than did your sainted mother.’”

Eliza indeed recollected them, as words addressed to her that very morning by her father, while she hung upon his neck after the marriage ceremony.

“And you ought to know this ring,” resumed the woman, giving one ;—“step into your chamber, and look at it.”

Eliza did so, and at once recognised it as her father’s.

“Nay, I forgot,” said the woman’s voice at the door, as she flung a note across the narrow room, over Eliza’s shoulder, so that it rested upon the table—“read that, and then delay no longer.”

Eliza tore it open, and read—

“MY BELOVED CHILD,

“I am free ;—I wait to see you under a safe roof ; then I must hasten to my own concealment—only for a few days, however. Follow the bearer, a tall woman in a dark-grey cloke ; she will guide you to

Your happy, but anxious father,

T. H.”

"I follow you," whispered Eliza earnestly to the guide, after having again joined her in the shadow of the lobby.

The woman, making a sign to be cautious, looked down the stair, and listened; then, giving another sign, she descended. Eliza softly trod in her steps, and, without being observed by any one belonging to the house, found herself in the streets of Enniscorthy.

The guide rapidly paced through the town, our heroine still following. Bands of yeomen, showing rather alarmed anticipation than formidable preparation, patrolled the streets, in expectancy of the attack we have already noticed. As yet, only imperfectly acquainted with the theory of warlike defence, their sense of the coming danger was chiefly manifested when they stopped to listen to an unusual noise, or cried out to the inmates of the houses to extinguish their lights, or issued their mandates, that all persons not authorised to bear arms, and wearing the very suspicious garb of civil attire, should remain within-doors; or gave whatever other orders they vaguely, and often erroneously, supposed might conduce to success in combat. And upon one or two occasions, Eliza's

conductress showed great presence of mind, in so guiding her charge as to avoid sometimes detention, and sometimes questioning, by these anxious and zealous patrols.

They safely passed the lower part of the town, and glided through the thatched suburb, where all was still, and every one had seemingly retired to repose, although within every darkened hovel many an ear listened earnestly for the expected sounds of rush and tumult. At the very last cabin of the outlet, the woman halted, and tapped at its door. The latch was upraised, and a man appeared.

"Bring out the horses," said the guide.

"Where is my father?" asked Eliza.

"Hush!" was her companion's sole reply.

"He engaged to meet me, and he is not here," urged the anxious daughter.

"Be cautious of your words, Madam; none must hear you name his name; fearful danger would attend it."

The man brought out two horses.

"You will mount one of them, Madam," continued the woman. Eliza hesitated. "You will mount, or your father returns to Ennis-corthy, and is lost," she continued.

“ I have ventured thus far, and I will brave the result, in Heaven’s name,” thought Eliza, and she gained her saddle. Her companion was quickly seated in the other.

“ Still follow me, and fear not,” she whispered, and put her animal to a brisk pace.

Eliza was a good horsewoman ; but she found herself equalled, if not excelled, by her guide. Their rapid journey continued in silence ; and it might be after about a quarter of an hour’s riding, during which Eliza perceived that their course first lay northward from Enniscorthy, and then wheeled a short distance to its south-east, that, just on the ascent of a little one-arched bridge, they suddenly halted. The banks of the considerable brook it spanned were thickly wooded, forming a gloomy ravine, in which the dark summer’s night grew darker, and which afforded a fit place of concealment to any one careful of avoiding observation.

“ Advance !” said Eliza’s companion, still speaking in a controlled voice, although she turned it towards the dusky dell.

The noise of horses’ feet was heard within the gloom ; two mounted men emerged from it, and were shortly on the road. As they approached, the woman addressed Eliza in a whisper.

“ I now leave you, Madam, under your father’s protection. Be not doubtful, even though a daughter’s eye can scarce recognize him in his disguise. In the short time afforded for all our arrangements, it was impossible to find at hand a guide for your and his farther journey, who might be intrusted, beyond the slightest doubt of possible treachery, with the knowledge of your father’s person ; his present companion does not therefore know him ; and beware how you betray the secret to the man’s observation. Some whispers may be exchanged ; but every thing like conversation must be avoided. Farewell, Madam ! I return, in speed, to liberate Sir William Judkin. You and I shall meet again :” and turning her horse’s head, she rode back towards Enniscorthy.

In the person who now drew up beside Eliza, yet at some distance from her, she endeavoured to recognize her father. Although some doubts did spring up in her heart, she believed it was indeed he. He wore the great outside coat of a peasant, of which the stiff, standing-collar closed before his face, while a broad-brimmed hat flapped down into his eyes. But, after silently regarding him through the darkness of the night, Eliza was almost sure she caught the

peculiar mien of her beloved parent ; and it could not be a vulgar hand which managed the spirited horse he bestrode.

While yet she looked, he spoke in a whisper. " My beloved child has acted like herself. None but my own noble Eliza could have thus proved her own character ; but I reckoned on it, when I addressed her ; and by courageously exercising it, she has saved us both."

" Why, then, tunder-an'-turf," interrupted the guide, rudely pushing forward ; and his manner proclaimed a low-bred, and not a gentle peasant. " Misther, whatever it's plaisin to you to call yourself, if you're goin' to go, don't stop spakin down in your throath there, becace you have a wheezin' all the night long."

" You see we must be cautious," again whispered the object of this remonstrance. " I am not skilful at a feint ; and though I strove to adopt a natural tone while disguising my real one, this man at once discovers it to be an affectation."

Eliza had certainly listened in vain to catch some cadence of her father's voice ; now, however, she thought she should know one or two accnts of this second whisper.

" My dear father," she replied, as softly as

the softest voice could breathe the words, when the man had re-assumed his place in front, "I would not deserve the name of daughter had I disobeyed your command; and I implored the council of my God, and, I think, acted under the dictates He vouchsafed to whisper to my heart."

The rude guide again became impatient, and Eliza was now addressed, not in a cautious tone, by a voice which was quite strange to her; "Well, let us proceed as fast as our horses can travel; we have no time to lose."

"Faith! an' you may say that, Misther-wid-the-tongue-in-the-wizen, if you don't want to wait for the daylight to kitch us: a thing, I've a notion, you'd rather let alone."

"On, then, Sir!" and the party set forward. Eliza's companion rode within a cautious distance of her bridle; his attentions, as far as it seemed prudent to bestow them, evincing all the kindness and watchfulness of sincere affection. The rapid rate at which they held on, would of itself have prevented continued discourse, and only a few whispers still were interchanged between them; or, if they began a dialogue, the guide surely slacked his pace, whatever might be his motive, evidently that he

might overhear it ; perhaps he was merely curious to ascertain the identity of his fellow-travellers ; and, upon the appearance of any such attempt, increased caution became necessary. Eliza's companion also seemed of himself inclined to fits of reflection, and half-checked sighs often escaped him.

On one occasion, while thus apparently abstracted, and while the guide seemed less inquisitive than usual, Eliza addressed him, " You appear depressed, my dear Sir."

" Eliza, when removed from you, even though for a short time, I must tremble with anxiety and apprehension."

" May I not know the exact nature of the danger to which you will still believe me exposed, Sir ? If once aware of it, I could better nerve myself against it."

" You will, alas ! know it too soon. At present—see—it is impossible."

The man turned round to say, that as the road grew better, they must still increase their speed. When the next respite occurred, Eliza gently whispered, " I am naturally anxious about my husband, Sir."

Her companion started.

“ Your husband !—hah ! — Certainly, certainly, you must be, Eliza ;” and he was silent.

“ My words seem to have startled you, Sir ?”

“ Startled me ? no, child : why should they ? why should you not be anxious ?”

“ I have heard that this night he too should escape from prison.”

“ And you have heard truly.”

“ And that it was probable I should see him immediately after.”

“ See him ! to-night ! no, no, no ;—but, pardon me, Eliza, I cannot answer without agitation—dreadful agitation : it may be a long time before you see him.”

“ And why so, my dear Sir ? you alarm me.”

“ Your question involves the former explanation which you required of me, and therefore cannot at present be answered—judge for yourself—this fellow again interrupts us.”

“ Heaven protect us all ! for I see we are all yet surrounded by some frightful danger,” said Eliza, and they pushed on in silence.

This was the longest discourse that occurred during a rapid journey of about fourteen Irish miles. Most frequently they struck from the high-road into narrow ways, and often swept

over fields through which no beaten track marked the route. It is not in this place necessary to present the features of the country, now under the shadow of night ; enough to observe, that the travellers hurried through scenery of the same general character with that which has elsewhere been given as common to the County of Wexford ; up and down many ascents and descents, and within view, though indistinctly seen, of many eminences, bare or wooded ; and sometimes through tracts nearly barren : for, even so late as about thirty years ago, no part of Ireland had arrived at the degree of cultivation it now can boast.

With tolerable accuracy, it has been ascertained, that nearly at the hour when Sir William Judkin set off from Hartley Court, in a vain search after his bride to the town of Enniscorthy, that young and lovely bride was much fatigued with her long and rapid ride, ascending a winding avenue which led to a respectable-looking mansion seated on a green ascent. And as she turned her head over her shoulder, Eliza saw to her left hand an expanse of water, dimly shown by the reflection of the sky over its bosom, which could not be called lightsome, but rather just a shade less dark than the hills and plains

it overhung; and covering another green eminence, opposite to that on which the house was situated, and ascending from the edge of the water, appeared, vague and shapeless, a massive pile of ruined building.

“Where are we, Sir?” she asked.

“Yonder, my dear child, is your house of refuge: to your left are the ruins of Dunbrody Abbey, which the morning light will present to you as a noble object in the landscape. I will but see you to the threshold of your asylum, Eliza; and then, while the darkness yet favours my escape to my own place of concealment, we must bid each other adieu.”

“And whither do you go, Sir?”

“I must be seen only by one confidential person,” answered her companion, as if evading her last whispered question, or perhaps he had not heard it,—“to no other will I intrust my life: and believe me, Eliza, my great anxiety to preserve that life is with a view of making it useful to you; for it may still happen that you will require my guidance and guardianship.”

“Your words again alarm me, Sir.—Oh, speak, Sir! my husband!”

The guide had knocked loudly at the door of the house, to which they were now very near;

it opened, lights appeared from it, and the man, turning in his saddle, seemed closely watching them.

“ We must part, Eliza ; I leave you in safety—it depends on yourself to continue secure from danger. Stir not from the house until you hear tidings of me again.—Farewell !—I must not even touch your hand, my child—the fellow notes us two closely—nor can I venture nearer to the light of the door. God Almighty bless you !”

“ And protect you, my dear Sir,” said Eliza, as he turned his horse’s head.

A man and woman, both elderly, holding candles in their hands, and having the appearance of respectable domestics, now stood bowing and curtesying to Eliza at the hall-door. The man stepped out to assist her to dismount. When she touched the ground, she turned round to catch a parting glance of her father. He also had dismounted, at some distance, and seemed preparing to bestride a fresh horse. The obsequious servant ushered her up the steps to the house. At the door she again looked back ; it seemed the same figure that a second time met her eye, indistinctly discerned through the gloom, except that, along with the loose peasant’s great-

coat, a horse-hair helmet now took place of the former slouched hat. The variation made Eliza curious. She gazed more attentively. The person stooped as if to examine one of the hoofs of his horse. In the action, his helmet fell off, and the lights held by the domestics streaming out at the same moment through the darkness, fell on his uncovered head, and fitfully revealed to Eliza a much-dreaded countenance. Stunned at the view, or perhaps, fancy, she staggered into the hall; faintness was closing on her heart;—at the thought of whose house she entered—the house of Talbot—of the individual she believed she had just beheld—Eliza made an effort, however, to rush out; but the heavy door was suddenly shut on her, and retreat cut off.

CHAPTER VI.

THAT she had been betrayed—that the letter delivered by the woman had not come from her father—that the companion of her rapid ride was not her father—that, remote from friendly aid, she was in the power of her enemy, while the two dear beings for whom she had dared all, and lost all, still remained in prison, or, perhaps, had by this time ignominiously ended their lives—these were the conclusions that instantly forced themselves upon Eliza.

And, with quick combination, everything now seemed to add proof of the appalling facts. Instead of her father attempting to use a feigned voice, she contemplated his treacherous representative as trying to imitate her father's real one, and depending upon her credulous belief of the first case, to hide his occasional, indeed general, failure. The interference of the guide to hinder their protracted discourse on the road, had

been planned, as part of the system of deception. Her companion's frequent fits of abstraction, and his expressive sighs, as they rode along, indicated, not the anxiety of a parent, but the presumptuous aspirations of a lover, with, perhaps, some struggles of remorse, or at least, of doubts and fears of her future estimation of him, or of the consequences of his outrageous conduct. And how could she have been so infatuated as not to have properly understood his start and agitation when she mentioned her husband's name, and his whole evident disinclination to interchange a word concerning Sir William?

Trembling upon a seat in the hall, horror and despair wholly possessed Eliza at the first view of her situation. But she brought to mind that, before leaving the inn, she had resolved to take her chance of either of two results, and to brave her fate, should the present one ensue. This thought rallied her, at least out of a state of mere weakness and inanity. Then she reflected, that if she was lost, so were the only beings with whom she could ever wish to share life; and Eliza told her heart to prepare for destruction with them. With them? Nay, for them! The idea completed her triumph over her

position, and despair changed into desperation ; and terror and yielding into the stern pride of wretchedness.

“ Won’t you walk up-stairs to your nice room, my lady ?” asked the female servant, with a very respectful and even tender voice.

Eliza raised her eyes and closely scanned her two attendants, as the one curtsied to the ground, and the other bowed profoundly. Both were attired, and demeaned themselves, as decent upper-servants of that day, and nothing about either gave the notion that she was immediately in the hands of those who would treat her rudely or even unkindly. On the contrary, if appearance could at all be trusted, and Eliza’s recent experience seemed to warn her that it seldom could, the man and woman equally showed a benevolent, respectful sympathy with her situation, which might well inspire some confidence.

She arose from the hall-seat, and stood firmly, to her full height, before them, as she inquired with calm dignity,

“ In whose house am I ?”

“ In a house, my lady, where hurt or harm daa’r’nt come nigh a hair o’ your head,” answered the female, still curtseying.

“ But who is its owner ?”

“ We ’re bound up not to spake about that till the time comes, my lady ; only it ’s owned by one that ’ud turn the world inside out to make pleasure for you, ma’am, and that ’ud no more hurt you, my purty lady, than he ’d chop the head off iv his own showlders.”

“ Answer directly to my question—does this house belong to Captain Talbot, and is it by his agency I have been conveyed hither ?”

The man and woman looked at each other, as if mutually endeavouring to ascertain the reply that should be given, and Eliza began to give up her slight confidence in them ; or perhaps they were only surprised at her question ; she would see.

“ We don’t know the bould Capt’n you ’re spakin’ about, ma’am, no more than we know the man in the moon : who is he, I wondher, Robert ?” said the woman.

“ Who is he ?” echoed Robert, hesitatingly, “ I b’lieve I hard till o’ sich a Capt’n, Nelly, some time or other ;—but, my lady—” and he bowed his powdered head very low, until his loyal queue protruded horizontally from his shoulders—“ if it ’s in your mind to think that ould Robert manes you any thing worse than

goin' about this house, on his two bare knees, to do every command you'll put on him, may them same two legs be cut off this moment, an' thrun' out in the yard for the dog's supper. Have thrust in us, my lady; do, my lady; we're honest ould sarv'nts, my lady, an' we'll lose the life for you, dhrop by dhrop."

"Ah, then, my purty, darling lady, do, an' you won't be sorry—" urged the female, with so much earnestness that tears, sincere or artificial, stood in her eyes; and Eliza remarked that while Robert spoke his voice sounded quiveringly, so that the two old domestics must be very excellent actors, if she was not, to them, at least, an object of pity, and, so far as they were able to afford it, protection.

Almost instinctively, therefore, at the woman's repeated entreaties, she ascended the stair, her attendant now smiling very officiously and benevolently, and seeming one of the most affectionate beings alive.

"And here it is, my lady," entering a large sleeping-chamber; "and here's as nice a bed as 'ud do the Queen o' Morocco to lie down in; but no wise too good for the lodger it'll have to-night. I'll bring you tay, my lady, or supper, or I'll help you to undhress, or any other

comfort you 'd have afther your journey, only say id, my lady."

"Do you persist in refusing to inform me into whose house I have been conveyed?"

"We couldn't be tellin' that yet, my lady; indeed we couldn't; an' it wouldn't be for your good to know id, the prasant time; but he's the thrne friend of you and yours, an' don't be un-asy, my honey lady: I'm a mother, an' the mother o' daughters, too, an' I'll give you lave to say that any one of *them* is a disgrace to their mother, an' by their mother's own fault, too, if ever you find me doing or saying towards you what I shouldn't do or say."

"Can you tell me any thing of my father?"

"Ah, then, nothin' very particklar," answered the attendant, adroitly hiding some sudden agitation; "only Robert was sayin' he was safe an' sound, my lady."

"Perhaps you have heard Robert mention another person—Sir William Judkin?"

"Never a word, then, my lady; but I'm not curos, all out."

"Well—I do not choose to be assisted in preparing for bed—leave the lights, and retire,"

Eliza did not, indeed, seek repose. Although her body was fatigued and harassed, she could

not quell her mind to that quiet necessary for sleep. Besides, in her present very doubtful situation, waking and watching were her part, rather than slumber.

Had she indeed seen her dreaded foe? was she in his power—in his house? Might it not be possible that her boding, disturbed state of mind only conferred upon other features, amid the darkness and the hurry of the hour, a likeness to those which haunted her imagination? The appearance and manner of her two attendants certainly strengthened the conjecture.

But why should they refuse to name the proprietor of the mansion in which she was? If they did not fear that she would dislike to hear his name, how arose the necessity for their pertinacious silence? And what name but one could sound odious to her? Again Eliza relapsed into all her first apprehensions of treachery; and again the picture of her father and her husband, brought to an ignominious death, rose so vividly before her fancy, that she started up as if to confront a real occurrence.

Thus employed during the few hours of the night, the summer morning found her still waking; and, notwithstanding her previous re-

solves to nerve herself against the event, still wretched and trembling. Her eyes were red with scalding tears, as she arose unconsciously, at the first summons of the dawn, and looked from her window: and although the old abbey of Dunbrody, an extensive mass of monastic ruin, would at another time have interested her, Eliza heeded it not; nor, although a great portion of her enjoyment of life had hitherto been drawn from the beauties of outward Nature, did she now dwell with pleasure on the fine expanse of water beneath the old ruins' green ascent, nor transfer her admiring glance to the wooded heights, near and remote, some vaguely expressed in the yet lingering mists of the night, some glowing and sparkling in a contrast of sunny clearness.

The uncertainty of her predicament chiefly harassed Eliza. That she was the victim of a plan to separate her from her only friends, while they should be destroyed in her absence, seemed the most likely case; yet it was not fully proved; and if, taking it for granted, she should attempt and succeed in an escape, and if, after all, it turned out to be the fact, that her late movements and her present situation were indeed guided and chosen by her father,

the result of her precipitation might be terrible. Then, in reality, she might fall into the hands of the enemy, from whom it had been her parent's care to shield her—nay, and then, indeed, that parent might be exposed by her to inevitable ruin.

Partially, a guiding thought struck upon Eliza. Sir William's note—which she could not bring herself to suspect as strongly as she did the letter purporting to come from her father—advised concealment until he could fly to her assistance; thus he seemed to have been aware of a plan to convey her to a place of safety; if so, he would be with her in the course of that day; for the woman, and the person calling himself her father, had permitted her to reckon confidently upon Sir William's deliverance from prison before the morning, and Eliza would await his coming in resignation.

She would be watchful, too; observe more closely the real characters of the servants in attendance upon her, and, if possible, gain from them more information than they had yet given.

Having thus arrived at something like a conclusion as to the course of action it befitted

her to pursue, Eliza's mind grew comparatively calm, although not with the calm of assurance. For the first time, she cast her eyes observantly around her. She was in a bed-chamber, arranged with all the elegance which should distinguish a lady's. Two doors opened from it, one into the landing-place, another, as Eliza ascertained by a glance, into a dressing-room. Both these she secured; and closing the shutters on the beautiful prospect that could not attract her, yielded at last to a natural wish for repose.

But it was a broken slumber that visited her pillow. Her own agonised groan, half-sounding upon her ear, often assumed, corresponding with a frightful scene rapidly conjured up to eke it out, the dying and despairing cries of those she loved; and she would start, and awaken, and rise up on her pillow to fix her eyes on objects that seemed actually present with her. Nature will often, indeed, like a tender nurse, cradle the most wretched to repose, permitting the beguiled fancy to enjoy prospects of bliss of which the waking mind dares not entertain a hope; but with Eliza it seemed as if, in cruel sport, true perception was extinguished only for the purpose of pre-

senting to her mind exaggerations of her real misery."

She could not tell how long her unrefreshing sleep had continued, when she was awakened by the noise of some wheeled carriage, near the house. Arising, in eager anticipation, she flew to the window, opened the shutters, and looked out. It was but a cart passing down the avenue, driven, however, by a man whom, under some circumstances disadvantageous to him, or disagreeable to her, she vaguely remembered to have seen before. In fact, she beheld Sam Stick-leg, leaving the house, after having delivered, according to the orders of his chief, the "little thrunk," which, along with Nanny's chest, helped to load the cart both had driven the previous night from Hartley Court.

Turning from the window, much disappointed, and alarmed afresh, though she knew not distinctly why, at this man's appearance, Eliza heard a cautious step in the dressing-closet; and, before she had recovered from her start, a respectful tap sounded at the door inside, and the obsequious voice of her female attendant requested admission. Eliza opened the door and entered the little apartment. To her

surprise it appeared furnished with all the elegancies of a lady's toilet—some of them her own; and, following Mrs. Nelly's arrangements about the room, her astonishment gained its height, when in a wardrobe to one side she discovered the individual habiliments she had left behind at Hartley Court.

She demanded an explanation of this mystery; but Mrs. Nelly would only inform her, that "the purty things were sent by them that 'ud turn the world inside-out to make pleasure for her."

Eliza, according to her plan, proceeded, as cautiously as she knew how, to elicit from the woman the information she had before suppressed; but except a reiteration that she was in a house where all were her humblest slaves, and where "Robert 'ud give out the last dhrop to keep away hurt or harum from her," Mrs. Nelly guarded her secret. And Eliza's suspicions sprung up anew at this obstinate equivocation; and, notwithstanding that the old dame seemed so good-natured and even matronly in all her little attentions, still there remained a doubt that she was acting a part of specious dissimulation.

The day was wearing away without any ap-

pearance of Sir William Judkin, or any account from him, and Eliza's terrors and misgivings returned in treble force. Yielding to an undefined impulse, she left her chamber, and walked through the house. It was tastily and richly fitted up. The thought of escape occurred very strongly. She looked round to observe if she was alone: Mrs. Nelly, curtseying to her glance, stood at the door of the extensive drawing-room, into which Eliza had last walked. She quitted the apartment, and continued to explore the mansion; and now her duenna watched her every movement, and Robert also was often encountered, bowing very low whenever Eliza noticed him with her eye, while at each bow his absurd queue poked out from his shoulders.

"I am a prisoner," thought Eliza; "let me see."

She approached the hail-door. It was locked, and the key removed. She required it to be opened, stating her wish to walk towards the ruins.

"Ah, then, my purty, purty lady," cried Mrs. Nelly, "sure you couldn't think o' sich a thing,—the runes! ay, the runes an' the runation entirely; how do you know, in the wide

world, who'd come across you, my lady?—Oh, my gracious goodness! sure that 'ud be goin' in the way o' harum, sure enough."

"I will make the trial—let me have the key."

"The key doesn't be wid me, my lady; it's Robert whets the dours; he's a careful man: but for goodness sake, my lady, don't go for to put yourself in the way o' them that 'ud do you hurt an' harum."

"That's my affair, good woman: if, indeed, you have been directed to act as my servant, obey my orders."

"Ah, then, it's I got my good commands, my lady, to go undher your feet wid love an' honour, sure enough; an' I'd rather to run o' your arrands nor if it was the Queen o' Moroco was bidding me—"

"Why, then, refuse me the key? I will seek Robert myself."

But Robert was not far off. Eliza discovered by Mrs. Nelly's glance that he stood close behind her own back; and as quickly turning round, she detected him staring with distended eyes at his fellow-servant, and distorting his mouth into a kind of anxious grin, while by raising his arm, and urging it downward, he enforced the mean-

ing of all his grimace, well understood by Mrs. Nelly, as an exhortation not to give up her point. When suddenly discovered by Eliza going through this dumb-show, he started in the utmost confusion, and then observed, giving his usual profound reverence,

“The kay, my lady ! the kay o’ that dour ? oh—ay, the kay ; I wondher where is it ?” looking beseechingly at Mrs. Nelly, who stretched out both her hands, and said, in her most earnest tone,

“My gracious goodness, my lady, for the love of all the things in the world wide, don’t be keepin’ hould o’ that thought—sure they’d run away wid you from us.”

“They ? who ?”

“Who, my lady ? that’s what we’re bound not to tell.”

“Then if you refuse to inform me who or what I have to fear, I must doubt your story—and I *will* go forth :—the key, Sir ?”

“Ah, my lady, we couldn’t, we couldn’t.”

“Then I am a prisoner ?”

“A prisoner, my Lady ! Lord save us, Misthress Nelly, sure her ladyship isn’t a prisoner ?”

“ My gracious goodness, my honey, darlin’ lady, an’ sure you ’re not—only we’ve as good as sworn down on the buke to keep you out o’ hurt or harum.”

“ An’ my lady,” seconded Robert, “ out o’ hurt an’ harum you ’ll be kep; there isn’t one undher the clouds this day, or any other day, ’ill daare to look sour at you, while the size o’ a midge o’ poor ould Robert is to the fore.”

“ But after all, you will not give the key.”

Having received anew a firm though obsequious answer in the negative, Eliza hastened up stairs, all her worst apprehensions overpowering her. Mrs. Nelly followed her quickly with protestations against the thought of “ hurt or harum” being meant. Eliza re-entered her bedroom, too closely pursued by the old woman to allow of excluding her, and unable to hold out any longer, sank in a chair, and gave way to her excessive grief. Mrs. Nelly threw herself on her knees before her, and covering her eyes with her wrought muslin apron, sobbed as loudly as the young lady herself, beseeching her to take comfort, and still vouching that “ hurt or harum” were not intended; nor amid the paroxysm of her sorrows could Eliza avoid remark-

ing, that Robert stood outside the door, also sobbing, and also declaring, after every sob, that "hurt or harum shouldn't come next or near her."

Days thus elapsed, Eliza remaining a prey to the worst fears, yet not experiencing any misfortune more real than those fears, if her imprisonment within the limits of the house be excepted, when something at last occurred dreadfully to aggravate the miseries of her situation, and to convince her that she was indeed the captive of a treacherous enemy; and immediately after, something that led to her escape from her detested thralldom.

It is often, very often, the fate of the heroines of stories, to be carried off by some desperate man interested in thwarting their schemes of happiness; and while we pronounce it irregular, as well as unfortunate, that so many fair and deserving beings should be exposed to this customary calamity of novels, we also admit the adventure to be a very commonplace one. In the present instance, however, the reader's heroine is, in fact and truth, a prisoner without any invention of ours; and farther, we pray him to approach our last chapter, ere he classes

us with the general tribe of abductors, (upon paper,) of beauty and innocence.

Ever since the days of chivalry, too, although almost all the ladies-loves of knighthood have been thus treacherously forced into durance by some dwarf, giant, or enchanter, they have, as invariably been rescued and restored to their friends by some gallant arm; and again we must record, in our heroine's behalf, a similar providential occurrence. But it was no knight, with nodding plumes, that achieved the task, and no pomp of arms such as used to attend the enlargement of lovely captives, graced the event; it was not even an ordinary lover, in plain clothes, who appeared as the deliverer of our Eliza; her freedom was the work of a very humble, but, as the reader has already judged her, a very clever old personage,—no other, in fact, than our friend Nanny the Knitter, who, joined to her love for her ward, so she always considered Eliza, might have drawn from the experience of her own late captivity, a benevolent motive to assist all poor prisoners.

At the reader's last parting from Nanny, she was in view of a cabin, under the roof of which she hoped for temporary concealment

from the man whom she had many reasons to consider as "the fell destroyer."

This cabin proved to be the abode of a sister of Shawn-a-Gow, who, many years ago, had been married to a small farmer; and Kitty Gow now found protection in it, since the breaking-up of Sir Thomas Hartley's establishment had deprived her of a more comfortable home. Her aunt's husband, and her two sons, had gone to join the insurgent standard, whether willingly or not cannot positively be stated; but even disinclination could not have served to keep them inactive, as detachments had been sent to rout out the male inhabitants of every cabin, and demur to their summons must have only caused death at their hands. Illness prevented the wife from following her husband, and her daughters remained to attend her; otherwise, poor Kitty Gow might again have wanted an asylum, and the poor Knitter a ready place of refuge.

Under present circumstances, however, old Nanny was favourably received; such indeed must have proved the case amongst any of her acquaintances; nay, amongst total strangers; for even under a roof quite new to her, Nanny never yet had failed to establish herself in the

snuggest corner, and to resume the proprietorship of it whenever she again came within its attractive influence.

Nanny displayed her person and her head, sorely bruised and battered, and cried—"Oh! asy, asy, asy, my honey pet!" as Kitty Delouchery, and the commiserating girls of the house, examined various protuberances that felt very soft to the touch. Half the day was spent in the recital of her moving and wondrous adventure, and in moaning and wailing in all the pathos of pain; and at length the poor Knitter felt so really ill as to be compelled "to take to the bed," with a prospect of not rising thence for many days.

This was an affliction to her almost as sore as her durance in the chest, or as the bruises it had conferred; for, upon entering the cabin, she looked to the undertaking her plans for the relief of the heiress of Hartley Court almost immediately; and her fretting at the disappointment, and her extreme anxiety again to have the use of her alert limbs, only retarded her uprise.

But although Nanny's confinement of some days postponed her generous and heroic purpose, perhaps, by affording time for sedate re-

flection, it contributed to, rather than detracted from, the chances of ultimate success. Her first impulse had been to seek out Sir William Judkin, and inform him where to find his wife; but amid the after-thoughts of her lonely pillow, Nanny reflected that, supposing Sir William delivered from prison, (a matter she strongly doubted,) he was, according to the admissions of Rattling Bill, overheard in her chest, either too closely watched to allow of his acting beneficially, or—"The Lord have marcy on his sowl in glory, above, amin!"—dead and buried by this time in the church-yard of Dunbrody. To confer with him, therefore, were impossible, in the latter case; or a useless waste of time, already too much wasted, in the former case. Nay, did he yet live, and live even with full liberty to take his own measures, he would go too hotly and incautiously to work; would too openly approach the place of his wife's concealment, and afford, by his first movement, a signal to Talbot to convey her to some other place, whither neither he nor Nanny could trace her. The result of all these cogitations, therefore, was, that she, Nanny, and no other person,—except, indeed, that "purty Kitty Gow," might be called in as an assistant,—was capable

of undertaking the liberation of Eliza. And so, having at length recovered the use of her persevering, if not nimble feet, the Knitter, secretly abetted by the young counsellor just mentioned, engaged in the necessary measures for her exploit.

But, before her appearance on the scene of action, it is proper that Eliza should again be visited in her solitude.

For a few days she had borne up, with what resignation she could, against the agitating uncertainties of her state: Mrs. Nelly, still very obsequious, commiserating, and, Eliza feared, sycophantic; and her colleague Robert, always bowing whenever his fair charge appeared in view. Upon the evening of the fifth day, after twilight, and while pronouncing her usual parting benediction of—"The blessin' o' God be wid you an' about you, my lady!" Mrs. Nelly handed our heroine a thick letter, and withdrew. *

Eliza gazed on the superscription. Again the hand was, or seemed beyond doubt, to be her father's. She hastily broke the seal, and, with what feelings may easily be imagined, read the following terrible communication:—

“ MY BELOVED CHILD—

“ In a very few days more I shall be free to embrace you, and resume my place in society. My indefatigable friend has succeeded in making a favourable impression of my case upon Government, and we but await the official proceedings, which are to effect an unqualified reversal of the sentence of the court-martial. So, my own Eliza, keep up your spirits, and your admirable strength of mind, to give me a good welcome—and you will need both on another account: though your father is to be restored to you, Eliza, you have much to suffer—yet much to rejoice at, too; much for which to thank and glorify God. Attend:—When, upon the night of our rapid journey to your house of refuge, you asked me questions concerning a certain individual, I did not decline answering them merely because the rude guide might overhear us.—No, Eliza, I was too dreadfully agitated at the mentioning of *that man's* name, to trust myself in reply;—the abruptness of my answer might have destroyed you; or, at best, so much shocked you, as to interrupt our journey, and so provoke the most disastrous consequences. I saw the necessity of allowing myself to cool before we held farther communication on the

subject, and of placing you in a situation, where the effects upon you of what I had to tell would be attended with less peril to us all.

“ Now, my dearest child, I will answer your questions. You demanded intelligence concerning your husband. You have no husband ! Start not, (yet, at least,) nor mistake my meaning. The man—the fiend you call so, yet lives—but you wrongly call him so—he is not your husband ! Hearken to an explanation, which can but be given in the form of a statement that, while it fully explains your predicament, will also supply a clue to my late and present situation.

“ Before he saw you, or at least addressed you, he had won the heart of a beautiful young creature who loved him to excess—to a wild, a passionate excess, unfeminine, if not degrading. She was the daughter of a woman of high birth, but of passions and dispositions exceeding her own in strength, in obstinacy, and indeed in quality. This wretched mother of a wretched daughter, was at once as haughty and impetuous in spirit, as she was grovelling in inclination. Partly to escape a match she detested—partly to indulge an unworthy preference—she eloped from her father’s house with a man of obscure

birth, mean, and even vicious habits, and who was recommended to her eye alone, by a tolerable exterior, and a bold address. After the first burst of her rash and ignoble passion, she soon discovered to what a wretch she had attached herself; and, cut off, by her own act, from a return to her family and to society, she abandoned her despicable companion, husband, I believe, and retired from his view into a remote solitude, where was born the victim of Sir W—— J——’s villany.

“ The unhappy woman now had an object in existence. It became her anxious wish and endeavour to educate her daughter for a place in that society which was shut against herself. She partially succeeded; but her lonely communings with her child did not assist other and better impressions, nor help to subdue the dangerous strength of passion, the gloominess of mind, and the haughty and revengeful spirit she had transmitted to her.

“ The tempter appeared, and mother, as well as daughter, eagerly countenanced his attentions; the one, because she saw in him a man who, by espousing her child, could place her in rank and station; the other, as I have said, because she extravagantly loved him. His visits

to their romantic solitude were frequent ;—let me dispatch this point at once :—under a promise of marriage he destroyed his victim.

“ After some time, the deluded girl heard that he had paid his addresses to you. Giving way to the stern vehemence of her nature, now heightened by almost every goading passion, she quitted her home, and hastened to confront him. They met in Waterford, where he was transacting some business. Accusations and reproaches passed between them. She taxed him with his infidelity ; reminded him of his oaths to her ; intimated that she must soon become a mother ; and plainly and proudly told him that at the very altar she would step between him and you.

“ The wily fiend laughed at her fury ; swore that he had never entertained the most remote idea of abandoning her ; that the rumour of his attentions to you was false ; that his love for her was as strong as ever ; and to prove his assertions, he proposed to make her his wife without loss of time.

“ Again she trusted him. The circumstance of his procuring a disgraced clergyman to celebrate the marriage ceremony did not arouse her suspicions, although the man was intoxi-

cated while he performed his office, and was incapable of comprehending the rank or even the names of the parties.

“ Restored to her destroyer’s endearments, she once more gave way to romantic bliss. He proposed a pleasurable excursion on the water about Dunbrody, near to his residence, in which she was to assume her place as wife and mistress. Attended by one servant, they embarked in a small boat upon the wide river.— Now, Eliza, my dear and precious treasure, so miraculously saved—summon all your strength of mind to note the sequel.—They were in the midst of the expanse of water. Night and silence reigned around them. Her arm was round his neck, and she whispered into his ear her enjoyment of the sweet solemnity of the scene, as his bride, and while the heart was happy. Even in the dim light, she saw his brow suddenly darken. He snatched a pistol from his bosom, and struck her with it on the forehead. She fell, uttering one loud scream ; blow followed blow, now dealt by the servant as well as by the master, and she retained, for a moment, just as much consciousness as informed her that both were engaged in perpetrating a preconcerted murder. She had sealed

her doom, when she told him that, while she lived she would stand between him and you.

“ They must have deemed her dead, under repeated blows, although Providence willed that they should err in their conclusions; for she partially regained her senses, struggling in the water into which they had cast her. Perception again failed; and at its next return, she vaguely apprehended that she was in another boat, rowed by two vulgar men.

“ By their conversation, it appeared that, walking by the banks of the broad river, they had heard her scream, and possessing themselves of a boat, which lay pulled up from the influence of the tide, rowed out and saved her. But their farther discourse told that they thought her dead; and by word, by groan, or cry, she did not undeceive them. The first forming of a dreadful resolution, suggested even with the faintest return of consciousness, kept her silent.

“ The men conveyed her to a miserable cabin, tenanted by an old woman and her daughter, and one of them undertook to dress her wounds, and skilfully performed the task. This individual manifested towards her an anxiety, and even a gentleness, very different

from his boisterous manner to others, for which he roughly swore he could not account. He questioned her often as to the names of the perpetrators of the outrage upon her ; but still, though allowing them to see she was now sensible, the sufferer kept her secret. Other pangs besides those caused by the murderous hand of her demon-husband, racked her frame ; —nay, he had directly caused even these. The men withdrew ; and attended by the old woman and her daughter, she was prematurely delivered of a dead infant. She asked to look upon it ; a glance told her that its father's blows had killed it. And there, in that wretched hovel, stretched upon her damp straw, groaning beneath her festering wounds, and feebly pressing her murdered baby to her heart, the purpose before thought of settled into deep resolution. With that broken and despairing heart she swore, should she live, to live but for revenge ; and for a revenge she regarded as rightful.

“ But it seemed that she could not live ; and the boisterous man inquired if she had no relations to whom it would be well to convey intelligence of her state. Still she was silent ; until, at a moment when she thought her death

inevitable, she called him to her side, and mentioned her mother's name. He started—and seemed as much agitated as a man of his nature and habits could be. An explanation ensued; and in the person of her vulgar and swaggering deliverer, the unhappy girl discovered a father.

“ He left her to seek the abode of the wife who for nineteen years he had not seen, and the victim's mother flew to her miserable couch. The shock almost instantly killed that haughty and fallen lady; the only hope of a whole life lay wrecked before her; and her last sob was given upon the feeble body of her child—but not before she had caused the sufferer to clasp hands with her across the little corse that lay between them, and renew the oath previously sworn.

“ The widowed and childless orphan saw in this additional misery of her mother's death, fresh cause to repeat, indeed, and to strengthen her former dread resolution. And even her profligate father, who witnessed the scene, knelt, unasked, and voluntarily devoted himself to act as the agent of her vengeance.

“ His daughter, though at another time she would have shunned all connexion with him,

now felt no shame of the parent who appeared fitted as well as anxious to promote her purpose. And he obviously seemed as much awed into interest by the lofty and lady-like character of his newly-discovered offspring, as he was induced to aid her at the prompting of any natural affection. In obedience to her first wishes, he and his companion secretly conveyed, to a certain place of burial, the corpses of her mother and of her infant. Returning to her straw couch, he was fully admitted into her confidence : and he swore to place her destroyer at her mercy, under circumstances that would permit her to deal with him as her dark heart longed, and had more than once vowed to do ; and, while she yet lay prostrate, he set off to contrive the secret capture of Sir W—— J——, before he should become wedded—nominally—to you, Eliza ;—for the prevention of that event was as anxiously desired by your wretched rival, as was the accomplishment of her actual revenge upon her—husband : indeed, she had instructed her father to prevent it by any measures he could devise, provided that, in the mean time, J—— escaped his grasp.

“ You have seen, Eliza, the man so often mentioned. You saw him in the character of a jug-

gler upon the review-field, almost the first day of his appearance abroad, in prosecution of his plans. You know, too, of one of his attempts to secure the person of his daughter's betrayer : I allude to the night when Priest Rourke rescued Sir W—— J——. But, governed by his double instructions, he intrigued to prevent the expected marriage between that fiend and you, at the same time that he sought to get him into his power, lest—as indeed it proved to be the case—his efforts in the latter instance should fail. And now I approach a part of my statement which relates to my own recent and present situations, as nearly as it does to yours.

“ Although this agent, Nale, felt, perhaps, really zealous for his daughter's sake, his character, and the habits of his whole life, rendered it impossible that he could act even in her regard without at the same time attending to his personal interests. In this view, instead of openly coming to me, and warning me of my beloved child's danger, he sought out your old admirer, Harry Talbot, of whose former relation towards you he soon made himself aware, and from whose chafing state of mind he cunningly calculated his own mean advantages,

And by slow degrees, only, and indifference to repeated bribes, did he communicate to Talbot any important information ; although, at the very first, he declared himself the possessor of a secret which would prove J—— a villain, at the mercy of the laws of his country, and effectually put an end to the acquaintance between you and him : thus, of course, arousing in the breast of the rejected lover an eager interest which he well knew how to turn to account.

“ The tangible communication he at last made was contained in the charge preferred against Judkin by Talbot, to your own ear, Eliza. But at the moment when Nale hinted this terrible fact, he had warned Talbot not for some time to divulge or proceed upon it. The man awaited his daughter’s restoration to health, or at least, a renewed consultation with her, before he would authorize a story, of which her personal appearance was the most necessary proof. But, hurried away by his mingled feelings of love for you, and, I believe, sincere alarm on your account, your old friend forgot this warning ; and thus Nale, still unable to advise with his daughter, did not hesitate to deny, before Magistrate Whaley, that

he had ever been authority for the startling accusation.

“ Meantime, a day was named for your marriage, and Nale, consistently with his atrocious character, had recourse to the most diabolical scheme for preventing its occurrence. And again you will find him urged on as much by a base selfishness, as by zeal in his true cause, for exertion. He planned, that if he could make out against J—— or me a plausible charge of disloyalty, the arrest of either would at once postpone your union, and entitle him, as informer, to a high reward; in other instances, he has played double with the wretched insurgents; but from this speculation, considering the importance that must attach to his services on account of our rank, he hoped to draw superior advantages.

“ It is to be presumed, that, with the chances of success equal to his view, he might have preferred J—— as the victim of his peculiar rascality; though I question even that, seeing how determined his unhappy daughter was to get her destroyer into her own hands, that she might herself inflict vengeance upon him. At all events, Nale could not fix on so many appearances in J——’s conduct and actions capa-

ble of being turned into evidence of disaffection, as he detected in mine; and accordingly, although J——, too, was arrested along with me, in order to secure a separation between him and you, and, indeed, to dispose him for the fate to which his desperate wife had doomed him, against me became directed the immediate shafts of false evidence.

“ I come to the last fact that it is at present prudent to communicate. The very night before the day appointed for your marriage, your poor rival, at length able to exert herself in her own behalf, sought out Nale, and learned from him his abominable scheme for carrying her wishes into effect. She learned, in real horror, that the villain had coolly sacrificed me, as well to promote her purpose, as to gratify his own thirst of money. She flew to a person who, without exposing her despicable parent, might, she hoped, interfere to protect me. That person had already known of Nale's plot, and, certainly in the most sagacious way, had resolved upon measures to defeat it. The result proves, indeed, how wisely, as well as how anxiously, he exerted himself to save your father, Eliza; for I speak of the friend before mentioned, to whom we owe all.

“ I conclude, by warning you that it is not upon Talbot’s previous assertion of the villany of J——, I now require you to credit the statements of this letter. Not even upon the allegations of Nale do I ask you to credit them. I have seen and conversed with the wretched heroine of my dark story, and from her own lips received all the facts I communicate to you. You have yourself seen and conversed with her, Eliza, though not in reference to this subject. She was the bearer of my first letter to you in Euniscorthy, and afterwards your guide to the spot where you met me. And in farther explanation of what I write, you shall see her again, perhaps before I can be quite at liberty to anticipate her visit. One word more I will add about her. It is the wish and effort of my friend and myself to save her destroyer from her personal revenge ; although we can but save him for the more sedate vengeance of the laws of his country.

“ Farewell, my beloved, my cherished, and wonderfully-preserved child ! God’s peace be with you where you are, until you can be folded to the heart of your doting father,

T. H.”

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE giving the letter which concludes the last chapter, the reader was left to imagine the feelings with which it was perused by Eliza, in preference to attempting any description of them. And we must now do the same thing, acknowledging our inability to follow the workings of her heart at the first shock of this demonstration of the fiendish perfidy of Sir William Judkin;—for demonstration Eliza took the letter to be. A doubt of its authenticity never once occurred to her. Every word read like truth, and like the very words of her father: and if for an instant any parts of it seemed strange, and strange only, as coming from him, they were those in which, notwithstanding the clear proofs of Talbot's bad and black character, evident in his arrest of his former friend, and in his conduct to herself at the castle of Enniscorthy, her beloved parent seemed to allude with toleration to that person.

After many pauses, after having often dropped it from her hand, or started up, clinging to her chair; or, feeling possessed of only as much strength as enabled her to reach for a gulp of water, after having often remained motionless in that chair, during several minutes, Eliza at length finished the perusal of this, to her, appalling document. And still she sat motionless, except for occasional shudderings, and tearless, too, when she heard the key turn, with scarce a sound, in the lock of her chamber-door, and then the handle was very gently moved, and a very gentle pull given.

Starting up in the utmost alarm, though she knew not distinctly why, Eliza hastened to ascertain if she had fastened the door on the inside. The bolt was indeed shot home; and she paused with suspended breath to observe what next would take place.

There came two almost silent knocks, as if little knobs of velvet had tapped. Eliza remained still as possible. The soft challenge was repeated; and then, after another pause, the faintest breath of a whisper trembled through the key-hole.

“It’s poor ould Nanny, Lady Elceezabeth Judkin, barrowknight, my honey pet.”

“ Nanny !” whispered Eliza, in reply, utterly amazed : “ Nanny ! impossible !”

She touched the bolt with her finger, but hesitated.

“ Don’t be a bit afeard, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey pet ; it ’s poor ould Nanny, as sure as I’m a lump iv a sinner this blessed night.”

It was the Knitter’s peculiar dialect, indeed, and an accompanying gurgle, quite distinct from any intonation of any other of the human species, which removed all Eliza’s doubts, and convinced her that her old counsellor sought an audience. Imitating Nanny’s proceedings, she gently undid the bolt ; and it seemed that, without the slightest creak, the door self-unfolded ; for Nanny had continued to hold the lock-handle in the opening twist, to which her second evolution brought it ; and then, an inhabitant of the regions of spirits never moved more noiselessly than did the very palpable old dame. Giving a peculiar look of caution, she very slowly coaxed the door to its closing position, and as slowly, and quite as imperceptibly to the ear, permitted the self-acting handle to revolve until it had again stolen into its place the bolt it commanded.

“ Nanny !” Eliza continued to repeat, “ I

can scarce believe my eyes ;” and the sight of the old woman was some little comfort to her heart, inasmuch as from her habits of close, and all but omnipresent observation, she instantly reckoned on receiving some welcome or necessary tidings concerning the world without.

“ Hooshth, hooshth, Lady Eleczabeth, my honey !” cautioned Nanny, as she completed her precautions of bolting, and even locking the door, each operation being just as noiseless as any that had preceded it.

“ Have you been sent to me ?—and by whom ?”

Nanny repeated her “ hooshth,” for she had not yet quite done with bolt and key.

“ Or if not, how, in Heaven’s name, have you found your way hither ?”

“ Hooshth, Lady Eleczabeth, my duck-o’-demons !—discoorse asy, or we ’re spiled for ever : them ears o’ Nelly abroad, though they ’re on the head o’ the gossip o’ me, that stood for the little daughther I have doin’ for herself in Ross town, they ’d hear the dhroppin’ o’ the weeniest minikin pin that ever stuck in a stomacher. So we ’ll stale as asy as ever we can, an’ we ’ll plank ourselves down in the corner beyant the bed, where the candle doesn’t shine ;

an' where the talk 'll be kep in, an' we'll converse about what brought ould Nanny to be so bould afore a lady o' the land."

And with the velvet paece of a cat, when stealing over the carpet in an apartment where she knows she has no right to be, Nanny led the way to the seeret corner, and while Eliza occupied a chair opposite to her, there "planked herself on her hunkers," and resumed,—“An' it's who sent me to you, you're axin', Lady Eleezabeth, my honey; an' sure, barrin' Divine Providence, this blessed an' holy night, no one sent ould Nanny bud herself; an' many a weary turnin' an' twinin' she had afore she could bring her poor ould four bones fornent you, my honey pet.”

And even under the urgent circumstances of the present case, when she knew and felt in her heart that every moment uselessly spent exposed her to detection, Nanny yet commenced her series of details with that very one she might have omitted, so much was she accustomed to a leisurely, digressive ramble, as well in her discourse, as in her personal peregrinations. It happened, however, singularly enough, that on this occasion, her idle gossip to her young patroness supplies the last link of her

proceedings since we last saw her, with which, previous to the dispatch of her real business, it may be necessary to acquaint the reader.

The day before her present appearance, she had called, just by chance, as it were, to visit, in Captain Talbot's new house the same house-keeper, Mrs. Nelly, with whom she had formerly been intimate in that gentleman's other house, about two miles from Hartley Court, and who was, indeed, godmother to "the little daught'er iv her." The gossips relished each other's society, and, with slight pressing, though much would have been offered if necessary, Nanny agreed to "stop the night." Towards evening, in consequence of some cautious hints, Mrs. Nanny took her visitor to inspect the fine new house; and Nanny saw the inside of every room under its roof, except two, which, according to her cicerone, were occupied by "an ould friend o' the masther's hidin' in 'em from hurt an' harum."

This hint was quite enough for the observant Knitter. The friends returned down-stairs to their tea, and Nanny, with great satisfaction, saw her hostess infuse a considerable quantity of strong whiskey into each cup, as a sovereign remedy (and Nanny agreed that it was) against

what Mrs. Nelly called the “wather-flash in the stimach.” But for this night she took no advantage of her discovery of the housekeeper’s habit of thus prescribing for her imaginary complaint.

Next morning, “afther her good break’ast, bless the providhers!” the old woman set out to complete her arrangements with Kitty Gow, promising to return “by the night-fall to her little bit o’ supper, an’ a snug bed for hersef.” She kept her promise; and, soon after Mrs. Nelly’s departure from Eliza, joined the housekeeper in her room, and found her again much troubled with “the wather-flash,” and disposed to attack it with her usual specific. And now Nanny’s praise of the remedy was downright eloquent, and she kindly admonished Mrs. Nelly to repeat it more than once; nay, when the most violent “wather-flash” must needs have been got under, (else were there no virtue in the medicine,) the patient consented, after a little earnest advice from her friend, to put “jist another three or four spoonfuls in her tay, to hendher id from comin’ on in the night-time;” so that, long before her usual hour, partly under the influence of the powerful soporific, partly under that of Nanny’s no less lulling accents,—

a monotonous rumble of voice, well calculated, like the wind through a keyhole at night, to set any one asleep,—Mrs. Nelly began, as her crony termed it, “to pay compliments;” that is, with gradually-closing lids, to drop her head on her breast, raise it, half conscious of the weakness, and then, as suddenly let it drop again; her mouth wearing all the while a curious kind of vague smile, that seemed to betoken her last fading sense of a polite necessity to respond to the unheard gabble of her entertaining guest.

By degrees Nanny lowered her voice, lest an abrupt change from talking to silence might have an unwished-for effect; and at length, rejoiced to see that the housekeeper slept profoundly. In a few minutes afterwards she was at Eliza’s chamber-door, but not for many minutes after that had she finished to her liking the first account of herself, which is here considerably abridged, in deference to the impatience of the reader.

Her next roundabout story consisted of a minute account of the secret arrangements of Kitty Gow and herself to accomplish the escape of Eliza from her state of durance; concluding with the intelligence that Kitty waited that moment, with a horse and pillion, in a secret

place near to the house, to become the guide of our heroine to the town of Ross, where Nanny's daughter would afford to both a shelter and a welcome.

Eliza now naturally inquired into the reason for Nanny's great anxiety to remove her from her present situation. She had heard the old woman confirm her own first suspicions, that she was under Talbot's roof, and thence inferred, doubtless sufficient cause in her own mind, for abandoning it as soon as possible ; but she foresaw, that merely this fact could not endue her friend with the unusual zeal she now manifested.

The history, at full length, of the Knitter's imprisonment in the chest followed ; involving her report of the direful discourse held between Rattling Bill and Sam Stick-leg during her itinerant captivity. Eliza listened in great agitation to Nanny's version of the declarations of Nale with respect to herself and Sir William, by which it strongly appeared that the young Baronet was to be murdered, as she had been ensnared and deprived of her liberty, in order to forward the views of Talbot upon herself ;—“He's only waitin', my honey pet,” said Nanny, half reporting, half commenting, “until

the darlin' iv a Sir William 'ill be berred in Dunbrody, abroad there, an' then he'll make you marry him in spite o' the world." And at this intelligence, so much to be relied on, Eliza instantly began to recur to all her former conclusions of treachery, and to doubt,—wondering how she could for a moment have omitted to do so—the last epistle, professing to come from her father.

Nanny could not be raving or romancing. The zeal and the disinterested heroism with which she had dared so many dangers to avert from her patroness the evil she believed hung over her, proved that she was not: proved that her motive to action must have been derived from the unquestionable evidence of her very correct ears. And if so, did it not appear plain that the whole story of Sir William's perfidy, as well as the letter which conveyed it, was invented by Talbot to further his presumptuous hopes of Eliza's favour? to dislodge his rival from her esteem, in order that a vacant place might be left for his future recommendation of himself? Nay, such recommendation had already lurked in the artful pages of that very letter: seemingly, under her father's hand, the wily enemy had sought to place some of his for-

mer actions favourably before her; and Eliza brought to mind, that even while no doubt of the beguiling document occurred, she had instinctively wondered, considering it penned by her father, at that obvious discrepancy; and from all this new conviction, her heart turned not only with renewed interest, but with trembling alarm for his safety, to the slandered and persecuted Sir William, and in the belief that she, as well as his foes, had wronged him, tears of self-reproach filled her eyes, followed by tears of joy that she again could think him worthy of her confidence.

But she was yet to receive more decisive proof of the truth of her reasonings. While reporting the memorable dialogue held at each side of the chest, Nanny had, as yet, forgotten or suppressed many important passages; for example, to say nothing of Nale's allusions to his being directed and "driven," by some unknown woman, in his designs upon Sir William Judkin, she never once repeated the words of that scoundrel and his comrade, in reference to Sir Thomas Hartley's death: and while the former omission might have been merely accidental, the latter, perhaps, chiefly arose out of delicacy to Eliza's "trouble, on the head o' the hangin' iv

the darlin' father iv her ;" for so Nanny afterwards professed ; it never having entered into her thoughts to conceive that Eliza had so long remained ignorant of what " all the world were risin' up their hands and eyes, wondherin at."

In answer, however, to Eliza's inquiries concerning the last account our Knitter could give of Sir William Judkin, the overwhelming intelligence at length reached our heroine.

" Iv all the nights o' the year, Lady Eleezabeth, my pet, it was last Monday night, or 'twould be the fittther to call it last Tuesday mornin', an' we wor hard at work, mysef an' Misthress Flannigan, an' Misther Flannigan, the butler, hidin' the plate an' all the things at Hartley Coort from the covetous yeomen, that we spected 'ud call back to take a loock at id afther we knew for sart'n that the darlin' Sir Thomas,—God be good to his sowl in glory ! amin,—was murdered from us——"

Eliza, with a quick catching of her breath, seized the woman's arm.

" Hah ! what do you say ?"

" Not all out so arly in the^e night, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey ; my ould tongue said it too pat—no, not till about two hours, or two hours an' a half afther, as I hard from the mouths o'

many that knows it well—yeomen, that stood by at the gallow's foot, as well as others—”

“Wretched old woman, be brief! what gallow's foot? whom did they stand by to see executed?”

“Ochone! ochone! an' who, an' who! an' who ud be worth talkin' iv, Lady Eleezabeth, my honey pet? who, when so many are sthrung up like dogs an' cats every hour o' the blessed day an' night! who, bud him that the world wide, man, woman an' child, are cryin' afther, from that day to this;—last Monday night, or what's the fittier to call id, last Tuesday mornin'! who, who, my poor graw iv a pet, but the honey darlin' father o' you, Lady Eleezabeth, you poor crature!”

Ere Nanny had quite ended, her auditor, without a single cry or groan, lay senseless at her feet.

It was a considerable time before the appalled gossip could succeed in restoring animation. As she seldom, however, allowed her feelings to overcome her judgment, Nanny actively engaged in all the usual methods adopted on such occasions, and at length saw her young friend able to sit up and gaze around her. Then the old dame, conscious of the enormous

impropriety she had committed in not ascertaining the extent of Eliza's information with regard to her father's death, previous to her own abrupt allusion, hastened to make a lowly apology.

"I ax God's pardon, an' your pardon, Lady Eleezabeth, my darlin' o' the world," and pushing herself from her sitting position on her heels, to her knees, she fell on the palms of her hands, and three times kissed the floor at Eliza's feet.

"Say once again distinctly, what you said just now—let me be sure I understand you," commanded Eliza, in a hollow voice.

"It was about—" whispered Nanny.

"My father!"

"Och, ay! but I'm a'most afeard to say it again, you look so frightened, my honey pet."

"Go on!" and Eliza did not abate one scintilla of the information Nanny could convey. That her father had indeed been executed upon the night of her rapid journey from Enniscorthy to her present place of imprisonment—that Captain Talbot had been foremost in precipitating his fate—that, in the same spirit in which he had refused our heroine admission to the castle of Enniscorthy, he had also openly

repulsed the witnesses who came to tender their evidence in favour of his old friend—and finally, that, in the dead hour of night, he had stood at the gallow's foot until the last breath escaped his victim; all this Eliza learned as matter-of-fact publicly known for many days past, and not denied by Talbot himself.

Benumbing to her mental faculties as was Eliza's tearless despair at this information, still she received from it the last incontrovertible proof, that since the moment of the strange woman's appearance before her in the inn at Enniscorthy, down to the present hour, deception and treachery had been practised upon her. It now admitted of no debate, that the two letters bearing her poor father's signature were base forgeries, that an impostor had personated him during her flight to Talbot's house, and that the author of this tissue of villany and deceit—the monster, Talbot, the murderer of her father, perhaps of her husband, whom in his insidious epistle he had so slandered—detained her under his roof, only awaiting his time to present himself before her.

While these thoughts became fixed in her stunned mind, Nanny watched her with much alarm, for Eliza, sitting still as a statue, and

her face pale and rigid as death, kept her dry burning eyes vacantly bent on the old woman. The Knitter, by all forms of condolence with which she was acquainted, tried to break through this most wretched of all the manifestations of grief, interlarding her appeals with continued allusions to the necessity for instant flight from the house in which they then were, and to the perfect state of readiness in which they would find Kitty Gow, close at hand.

"Come!" at last exclaimed Eliza, starting up with a suddenness that made Nanny bound aside, frog-like; and her patroness immediately set about arraying herself for a journey.

Nanny, still more alarmed at the uncalculating noise occasioned by Eliza's vehement motions and proceedings, humbly remonstrated upon the necessity of "doin' every thing quite an' asy;"—also adding, that before they could venture to leave the house together, it behoved her "to stae down stairs, widout makin' mooch noise wid her feet," and ascertain if all was favourable for their perilous attempt.

"Go, then!" said Eliza, in ^{the} a tone of voice still so little modulated to the necessities of the case, that Nanny saw it would be better not to provoke her into farther conversation. With-

out another word, therefore, the old woman got through all her silent process of unlocking, unbolting, and unlatching the door; and as Eliza, now attired for her expected flight, fixedly and almost sternly watched Nanny's exit, she began to regard the creeping creature but as an accomplice in the general plot so direfully perfected for her ruin.

With her throat parched and choking, but her impulse to scream aloud kept down; with her person erect, and braced in desperation, while her clasped hands met beneath her bosom; and with her yet unmoistened eye fixed upon the half-open door—thus stood Eliza at Nanny's return from reconnoitering the state of the garrison. The deep, stilly expression of her otherwise inexpressible woe—the stony composure of her features and lofty figure, in the silence and dim light of the spacious chamber—caused Nanny to start back, as soon as her grotesque person slid over the threshold. But, recovering herself, she gave a sign that circumstances seemed to favour their intended escape; and in a few minutes, partly owing to Mrs. Nelly's “cure for the wather-flash,” partly to her keys, which Nanny “jest borrowed” from the nail on which they hung, Eliza

occupied a pillion behind Kitty Gow, who, with her right knee over the pommel of a man's saddle, and her left foot not in a lady's stirrup, a whip in her hand, and a little bonnet tied down close to her ears, sat prepared to conduct Eliza from her abhorred prison. And thus humbly mounted, and with a girl as young as herself, and, at least in happier days, not unlike herself in character, to act as her esquire, did the heiress of Hartley Court prepare to fly the dangers that threatened her.

“ It's to Ross town you're for goin', Lady Eleezabeth, my darlin' pet,” said Nanny, as she stood a moment at Kitty Gow's stirrup—“ only six or seven miles, or thereaway, from us, an' where the little daughther o' me will do her best, as in duty bound, her an' hers, for ever, bless all good bennyfathers, to keep you out o' harum's way—an' the road afore you is clane an' clear iv them foolish, wicked Croppies that's behavin' themselves so bad elsewhere—an' Kitty Gow, my honey, jest tell Nance that, by the same token an ould woman was wid her last Christmas-day—an' she'll know what ould woman you mane—an' gave her, unknownst to a livin' sowl bud their own two sefs, four hundred in oaten meal for the child's Christmas-

box; an' I'll be wid ye myself, Lady Eleczabeth, my honey jewel, to-morrow arly, please God I live so long, an' gets safe an' sound out o' the one house wid Misthress Nelly;—an' lookee, Kitty, my pet," sinking her voice, so that Kitty only might hear her, "you have your own throubles to make you sorrowful, an' to keep the smiles from your two purty cheeks, an' to make the pleasant voice o' you be more dushmal nor it's used to be—bud, Kitty, my honey, Lady Eleczabeth's throubles is greater than yours by far, an' if you'd thry to rise her heart wid some merry stories on the road, an' maybe a merry laugh, an' the light heart, an' the quick thought an' word, at whatever may come across ye—God purtect the both! an' I don't mane that there's any danger—why, then, Kitty, my graw, you'd only be doin' what 'ud be the kind thing, an' the dutiful thing, in regard to one o' the ladies o' the land that the likes iv us has no right to compare oursefs to, or to laugh when they laugh, or to cry when they cry, or to think in our throubles when they're in their own throubles—to say nothin' o' what you're beholdin' for to her an' hers, or nothin' iv the boy that you wish well, that et his bread, an' dhrank his sup undher their roof,

and that you know I always had a good notion of, for your sake."

In the same low tone in which she was thus admonished, Kitty assured her counsellor that her own love and pity towards our heroine did not require to be excited into the disposition necessary for the sacrifice of her personal sorrows upon this extraordinary occasion; and that, in every respect, she would exert her spirits to—as Nanny expressed it—"rise Lady Eleezabeth's heart."

Adieus were interchanged; Kitty whipped her indifferent steed; and almost at the first step of their journey, she found herself appealed to for the observance of her promise to the Knitter. Hitherto, Eliza had kept the rigid stillness of manner, and the deep silence, in which she quitted Talbot's house. The motion of the horse acted as a keen remembrancer to her heart. She turned her head, and glanced at the hated house from which she was about to fly; her desolate situation appeared to her in a new, an afflicting, a tear-starting light; the thought of her father's death began to put in play all the sources of natural grief; she again turned her head, and looked upon her humble and feeble, and yet her only protector,—and at

last came the bursting shower, as, passing her arm tightly round Kitty Gow, she allowed her head to droop on her guide's shoulders, sobbing out, "Poor girl, poor girl!" — for by quick apprehension, she brought to mind Kitty's late misfortunes, not unlike her own; and sympathy for the humble maiden's similar state of unfriended misery, mingled with and made a part of Eliza's individual suffering.

Nanny had warranted that their road should prove free of the dangerous commotions which elsewhere must be encountered. But the result shows that however skilled she might be in other matters, she knew little of military movements, though, perhaps, she is entitled to an apology on this occasion, inasmuch as since nearly the first outbreak of the insurrection until she set off to reconnoitre Talbot's house, she had been confined to her bed, and so separated from almost all communication with any of her fellow-creatures who could faithfully report public proceedings.

But in fact, upon this night nearly the whole of the county of Wexford was in the hands of the insurgents; and already they contemplated a serious extension of their victories, by attacking the town of New Ross, the readiest

passage into the county of Kilkenny, where they expected to be joined by new reinforcements. The defence of Ross, therefore, became an object of considerable importance, and all the military force that could be collected were sent thither in expectation of the threatened advance of the victors of Owlard hill, of Enniscorthy, of Wexford, and of other places ; so that Nanny could scarce have chosen a more insecure destination for her protégée.

Again, it is to be noticed, that if Eliza's mind had been disposed to receive impressions congenial to its former tastes, she would have received much pleasure from the very beautiful night-scenes surrounding her during a part of her journey. At different parts of her route she might have caught glimpses of an expansive river, overhung with great masses of foliage, some blank and colourless, but boldly relieved against the clear sky, and others chequered by the young moon, which, since her flight from Enniscorthy, had been growing in the heavens : and as she approached the town, extension and variety of this class of scenery might have continued to raise her admiration ; Nature, not immersed in impenetrable sleep beneath a rayless night, but half hidden, half revealed, rather

enjoying a gentle slumber; while the timid light of the serene concave was reflected in the broad and smooth river, and mingling heights, clothed in their graceful woods, sloped down to bound its waters, or, pausing at a distance, allowed the soft meadow to stretch to its margin.

But Eliza had little perception for outward objects or appearances; or perhaps she attended to some of a character different from such as have been glanced at, yet in unison with her mood, or appealing to her situation. When, as was often the case, the burning cabin or mansion sent its sudden red glare against the sky, turning the moon's silver radiance into a sickly pale green, and tinging the summer hue of the woods as if with the soiled, rusted tints of latest autumn, Eliza's eye became momentarily interested; and the wild and distant shouts that, accompanying the occurrence, rang through some remote and unknown solitude, appealed still more directly to her terrors, her memory, and her mental associations.

Kitty Gow, who quickly saw how much in error Nanny had been as to the safety of their route, exerted herself to curb the new agitation thus often created in Eliza, and which she felt

manifested by a sudden start, an increased pressure of the young lady's arm round her waist, or a quick catching of breath, as if a scream was sought to be kept in. She augured good fortune to their journey; she promised happily for the future, and for Sir William Judkin; she alluded resignedly to her own late sorrows, and gaily to the successes of Tim Reily, which had been spirited to her ears, and which promised to make him a Croppy captain, at least. Nay, she ventured to sing some of his songs, composed under her inspiration; such as the "Pride o' the Slaney," which the reader may recollect, and some half-amorous, half-patriotic farewells dispatched to her since his enlistment under the Insurgent flag. And yet Kitty's heart was not quite so forgetful of her poor brother's death, of her mother's madness, and of her father's ruin and desperation; nor, indeed, so much at ease concerning the safety of Eliza and herself upon their present journey. In case of the occurrence of any thing dangerous, she depended, however, to no very modest extent, upon her own presence of mind, her adroitness, her "gift o' the tongue," and, be it added, her comeliness. But, notwithstanding her arrangements against ill-chance, the young fugitives approach-

ed, without accident or question, very close to their destination.

They were now within less than a quarter of a mile of the town of Ross. On the one hand a wooded hill, drooping its foliage over the road, darkened their way ; on the other a rich flat, thickly interspersed with trees, and beautified with streams of moonshine and mysterious depths of shadow, extended to the river, which also caught snatches of the last light upon its waters. There was no breeze ; not a leaf trembled. The air was soft and genial ; and but that the nightingale's song is never heard in the groves of Ireland, it were a sweet scene and hour for her melody. Instead, the little black-cap was chanting on a willow by the water's edge his comparatively imperfect, yet not disagreeable ditty ; and the land-rail was creaking through the silence of the dewy meadow.

Eliza had sunk into a fit of wordless and all-engrossing sorrow, notwithstanding Kitty Gow's best efforts to cheer her, when, in the midst of this tranquil and lovely scene, a peremptory voice gave the challenge,—“ Who goes there ? ”

The words sounded near to them, under the shadow of the overhanging trees. Eliza clung closer to her guide ; and Kitty inwardly saying,

"Now for it, if he's not too ould to be bothered wid a purty face, an' a glib tongue," reigned up her horse, and answered aloud, "It's a friend or two is here."

"Advance, friends, and give the counter-sign," and a mounted dragoon came forward from the darkness and confronted them.

"Take no notice of any *rhamansh* you'll hear me say, my lady," whispered Kitty.

"Aha! a brace o' girls!" said the dragoon, "where are ye goin', my lasses?"

"Why, Sir, we b'lieve this used to be the road to Ross town, an' we're goin' there," answered Kitty Delouchery, so disposing herself as to give him some idea of the really pretty face that seconded the merry voice in which she spoke.

"An' what's your business in Ross, my girl?"

"Why, Sir, an' I'll tell you that too. We're two protestan' girls, an' we live a' one side of Enniscorthy, about a mile or so;—if you're not too exact wid us, sure we'll give you good measure;—an' these Croppies, they burnt the house while the father was out wid the yeomen, an' we had to run for id, an' he's in Ross afore us, an' we're comin' to look for him."

“Well, that ’s all to be seen. You are prisoners until you account for yourselves—come with me!” and he seized the bridle of Kitty’s horse, and led his captives towards the town.

“Who goes there?” challenged another voice, after he had advanced some distance. The videttes soon recognised each other; and the first dragoon delivered the prisoners to his comrade, with instructions to forward them to the guard-house.

“Musha, an’ I’m glad of it,” reasoned Kitty—“he,”—meaning her first object of attack,—“he was a good-for-nothin’ ould throoper, but this crature looks like a body that ’ud take notice of a body.”

Eliza, although very unwilling to seem to countenance Kitty’s false statements, as well because they were such, as because she knew they must increase the present danger, if discovered, yet continued silent. Nanny had supplied her with a cloak, such as is worn by the lower class of females; Eliza had unconsciously adopted the disguise; she could not now consistently, or, still with a view to escape suspicion, show a character different from the station it implied;

and hence she was compelled to allow Kitty her own way.

The rustic coquette rightly interpreted the temperament of their new detainer.

"I'd bet a day's pay," said the man, as his more grave fellow-soldier withdrew, "that the girls want sweethearts—eh! my dears?"

"No, Sir, we thank you," answered Kitty; "we'd have more nor enough o' them if we were at home, an' the wars over."

"But you'll want one here, while the war lasts, you know."

"Why, then, that same wouldn't be a bad plan, if a body could make off a boy one 'ud like."

"What do you think of the boy before you? won't *he* do?"

"Faix! an' that 'ud be buyin' a pig in a bag, Sir; I can't see the sort you are at-all-at-all:—but I'll tell you what—I'll show face for face wid you."

"Done, by jingo!" answered the confident dragoon.

"Then here goes!"—she put her hand to untie her little bonnet, and then held it by the edge as she continued—"Mind the word o'

command I 'll give you :—take your own hairy bonnet in your fist !”—the man laughingly obeyed :—“ uncover heads !” and at the same moment both accordingly were uncovered, scrutinizing each other ; and, so far as the moonlight permitted a decision, the one showed a pretty, smiling face, and the other a fine, manly set of features.

All this time Eliza continued to tremble with apprehensions of the result of Kitty's untrue account of them, and she also felt shocked at the girl's levity. And it was in vain that she pressed her guide's arm ; in vain that she whispered, “ Forbear ! forbear ! at your peril !”

“ Are you done for yet ?” questioned Kitty of the dragoon, not noticing these hints and commands.

“ A'most,” he answered, in the same bantering tone ;—“ an' how are you off yourself ?”

“ Purty well, I thank you ; only a little kilt wid the looks o' you, jest as you are wid the looks o' me ;—we'd make a likely couple.”

“ I've no time to get married now, my lass ; an' there's no parson at hand if I had ; an' I'll tell you more, my handsome pet—I wouldn't, if I *had* the time an' the parson at our elbow.”

“ Well, no matther ; whisper ;” and she pulled

his arm towards her, and he leaned his ear to her lips:—"the sisther behind me on the pil-lion is sick, poor sowl! an' I can't stop to talk wid you now; bud bring us safe into the town, an' if I don't be stalin' out from her, never a hair on your cap, or more than that, in your whiskers;—bother to you! you spake to me in the night-time; I was longin' to be whisperin' wid a sodier."

"You're a darlin'!" answered the captivated dragoon;—"a kiss on the head o' the bargain."

"Wid a heart an' a half;—but mind my sisther!" and it was well for Kitty that Eliza's eyes were turned away; and also well for her, and for her new admirer too, that Tim O'Reilly was not a witness to the sealing of the compact.

"Where'll I see you?" continued Kitty.

"Wherever you like."

"Do you know the—let me think o' myself, for you're afther fluttherin' me a-bit—do you know the church in the town?"

"Right well."

"Ay—bud that won't do,—the church-yard is nigh hand, an' I'm afeard o' sperits. D'you know the Bungen Lane?"

"Never fear but I do."

"Ay, but that same isn't convanient;—d' you know the cross, in the fair-green, in the Irish-town?"

"As well as I know my horse."

"Well, afther you get us into the town, come up to the cross, in an hour's time, an' you'll see somebody stannin' behind it; an' yourself and that same somebody 'ill be spakin' together, maybe."

Upon these terms, Kitty and the dragoon proceeded together. The walls of the town had been all demolished, either by time, or by the extension of its buildings; but the gates were yet standing, or rather archways that gates once occupied; and from the road along which our travellers approached, by one of these archways, called the Friar's-Gate, they were to enter New-Ross. As part of the preparations for the expected attack, the inlet had just been half built up, and farther secured with wooden barricadoes, evidently of hasty erection.

When very near this entrance, a smooth, obliging voice, not unfamiliar to Eliza's ear, was heard to give a preparatory "hem!" as if to clear the passage for speaking, and then, in

the most good-natured accents in which the words could be pronounced, it demanded,

“ Pray, who goes there ? ”

“ Friends,” answered the dragoon.

“ I ’m sure you are,” rejoined the obliging voice ; “ I am, upon my credit ; but you must say ‘ General Johnson ’ to me, before I can let you pass—unless you like to pass without my lave,” he added, very resignedly.

“ Curse you ! a purty sentinel you are, with all my heart,” laughed the horseman : “ but, harkee,—here are two girls that must go into the town, for I and they say ‘ General Johnson ’ for you.”

“ General Johnson, an’ long life to him ! ” echoed Kitty—“ till to-morrow mornin’, when the boys comes in ; ” was her mental reservation.

“ Very well, very well ; I ’m happy to oblige you,” resumed the civil sentinel.

“ Remember the cross, in Irishtown, in an hour,” whispered Kitty’s new conquest.

“ If I ’m not there,” asseverated Kitty, heartily shaking the hand which had been ungloved for the purpose of duly presenting it,—“ I ’ll give you lave to cut the cross in two with your sword.”

Assured and fondly-confiding, the lover helped Kitty and "her sisther" to dismount; then assisted them down and up a deep trench newly dug between them and the gate; and then, once more reminding Kitty of her engagement, took charge of her old horse—in truth, scarce worth the care—and gallantly rode back to his post.

Eliza had heard the last allusions "to the cross," and now shrunk from, as she considered her to be, the criminal Kitty Delouchery.

"You're angry wid me, my lady," said Kitty. "God knows, only for your sake, I wouldn't make free wid a sodier o' King George's;—bud we'd be in the guard-house now, only for id."

"You jested, then?"

"Never fear, my lady: I'm not a bould girl, though I used to be a sprightly one, an' a little in the fashion o' makin' fools o' the men whenever it sarved my turn, or come into my head."

"Well, Kitty, I must overlook your departure from the truth, so much less an error than I supposed you guilty of, out of gratitude to your motive; though I believe no necessity warrants us to say the thing that is not, or to

promise without intending to perform: and indeed I wronged you by so quickly supposing you a wicked girl."

"Thry me, my lady, an' if you don't find Kitty Delouchery honest—why, then—" and Kitty's voice trembled—"why then tell her father of her, an' that 'ill be enough; he'd kill her wid his own hand."

"You may pass, my good girls, with the greatest pleasure," said the burly, waddling sentinel, advancing politely, his cap almost resting on his nose, and both his arms hugging his musket, not affectionately, but in instinctive terror, lest (as a monster of its kindred once before did) it might get loose and play him some prank.

"If I mistake not, Sir, I address Mr. Jennings, of Wexford," said Eliza.

"Upon my word and credit, Miss, and so you do;" the turn of respect was unconsciously rendered to Eliza's superior accent.

"Then, Sir, without hesitation, I claim the protection of your roof; if, indeed, you have a home in Ross."

"Why, upon my credit, my dear," altering his favourable impressions of Eliza, as he very oddly misconstrued her request: "upon my

credit, my dear, I don't know how that will be : I'm a quiet, regular man ; and though, as it happens, I have a house in Ross, at present I don't think it's a place for young women :— my wife—”

“ I see you do not know me, Mr. Jennings, though I thought you would—but look again,” throwing aside her cloak, “ I am the daughter of Sir Thomas Hartley, who has been a friend of yours, when you lived in Wexford, and who had the pleasure of taking you home safe to your family, after your accident at the review.”

“ Sir Thomas's daughter ?”

“ Yes, Sir ; at present friendless and unprotected, and compelled to fly from her enemies, and crave the charity of a roof to cover her.”

“ Oh, poor young lady !—oh, God pity you !—oh, yes, I heard of it.—Oh, dear me !—oh, come, Miss Hartley, upon my word and credit, and I'll see you to my house, sure enough ; and my poor wife and little daughters will be glad and proud to have you in it : they'll never forget, no more than myself, that day, when Sir Thomas, and now I remember, yourself along with him, Miss, handed me out of his own carriage, at the very dour o' the shop. Come, Miss, come—” he was preparing to bustle forward—

"but, upon my word and credit, they won't let me lave this till some one comes to stand in my place. Oh, Miss Hartley," and his voice sank to querulous complaint—"isn't it a miserable case for a quiet man like me, that has no more notion—no, I take my God to witness—no more notion of doing any one any harm than the babby on its mother's breast, to be forced to be out of his comfortable bed at this time o'night? marching about, and standing in the cold night-air, in this way, and houlding a gun, that you know, from what you 've seen, is often the death o' people?"

"Indeed, Sir, I think they might substitute younger men."

"An' them guns has a bathred to some people above others," said Kitty Delouchery, who had heard of Mr. Jennings's accident on the review-field.

"Upon my word I believe you, young woman."

After some farther discourse, Mr. Jennings invited Eliza and, as he understood Kitty to be, her servant, to wait by his side, upon his post, until he should be relieved, which he expected would very shortly occur. But Eliza was averse to the observation which this might oc-

casion, and also fearful, that by it strangers would become aware of her intention to accompany Mr. Jennings home; a fact she wished to conceal, lest Talbot might profit by it. She demurred, therefore, to Mr. Jennings's offer, and arranged instead, that, until he should be free, she and Kitty would await him at the house of Nanny's daughter, whither Kitty undertook to conduct our heroine; "the ways o' the place" being well known to the young coquette, as may be inferred from her dialogue with the susceptible dragoon.

Until really put to task, the inexperienced human mind can form no idea of its own powers of endurance. If, but a fortnight since, any one had prophesied to Eliza the accumulation of misery which she now experienced, she would have said that her death, or the deprivation of her senses, must have resulted from it. And, indeed, were she called upon only to bear, as she might, the anguish of her father's sudden and shameful death, and the fears of her husband's ruin along with it, it is probable that Eliza might have lay stunned under two such deadly blows: but the eager impulse to avoid a new evil, which, as a woman and a lady, her soul instinctively shrank from, supplied, by a

last appeal to her energies, the capability to struggle against her less recent trials.

Eliza's sense of her desolate and miserable situation, however, was not, amid all her present efforts to avoid a fell enemy, the less poignant or absorbing; and as she and Kitty Gow, after much knocking at the door of a very humble house, at last sat down in the little huxter's shop, of which Nanny's daughter was proprietor, to await the charitable offices of Mr. Jennings, her reflections caused her to wring her hands in agony.

Mr. Jennings had fled from Wexford, upon the day of its evacuation by the King's forces, to a brother in Ross, his wife and children accompanying, and often supporting him, along the sultry and dusty road. Unluckily, he did not, upon his safe arrival in the town, lay aside his military jacket, (although he had promptly forsaken his musket,) and he was therefore included in the general muster set on foot to oppose the continued successes of the insurgents. It will be believed, that he remonstrated against the evident injustice, as well as inhospitality, of thus binding him to the very stake which he had abandoned his own native place to avoid; and indeed he would have bluntly refused again

to bear arms, if he did not fear immediate persecution, and very probably death, as a suspected rebel, in consequence of his demur.

Our young adventurers had not to wait long for his coming. "He was let home for a while to take a bit of supper, and God knows it was only his due, afther walking and walking about for three long hours, when he ought to be out of his first sleep."

"I'll carry the goon for you, Sir," offered Kitty.

"Eh!" he cried, amazed at her hardihood, "won't you be afraid of it, child? It's loaded, I protest."

"Not a bit afeard, Sir; often I shot a crow when he'd be pickin' the barley on us."

"Why, then, upon my word, here it's for you—but take care, child—the laste thing in the world would let it off. Oh, Lord! turn the muzzle away, child!" as Kitty, shouldering her piece, slanted it towards him.

Arrived at his own door, Mr. Jennings's timid double-knock, somewhat between the plebeian single blow, and the more elegant tantararara, caused a great fuss within. More than one pair of feet hurried down-stairs; "Make haste, Peggy!" cried a shrill female voice; then two

persons were heard unlocking and unbolting the door; "Slip the bould, and I'll turn the key," was the agreement between the anxious little daughters; and as the father entered, he was so embraced and caressed by them, and by his wife, who now had descended, that for some time his companions escaped notice. He kissed his lady and his children with grateful rapture that he beheld them again, and wiping his forehead of its honourable moisture, bustled into his sitting-room. Here he bethought of presenting Eliza, and stating her name and unhappy situation, she was welcomed with a respectful cordiality which soothed her sick heart. And then ensued the disarming of the soldier; his cap was laid aside; his grievous belts and gaiters unbuckled and unbuttoned; and, at his particular request, in order that none of his family might run the hazard, Kitty placed his musket in a far corner.

A homely supper now appeared, and pressing Eliza to join him, he engaged it heartily. By the time he had satisfied his appetite, his wife handed him a tumbler of whiskey-punch, of which she had previously, and more than once, tasted a little in the spoon, adding at each trial, sugar, or water, or spirits, or lemon, until she

quite assured herself that it was exactly of the flavour which, by long experience, she knew would suit her husband's palate; and while he sipped it, he told of his patrolling through the streets, and of his standing sentinel to keep people from coming into the town, unless they said "General Johnson for him," and sincerely were his warlike labours commiserated by the listeners.

During this, Eliza was permitted, almost uninterruptedly, to pursue her own thoughts; for though her present protectors could do a kind action, they knew not how, particularly if appealed to by their own concerns at the same time, to do it gracefully or very considerately. Kitty Gow had retired to the kitchen. Suddenly a thundering peal rang at the hall-door. All started in terror. Mr. Jennings was peremptorily summoned forth to attend a full muster of his corps: by accounts just received, the entry of the rebels was instantly expected. A scene ensued of bustle, weeping, and lamenting. The poor man himself seemed overwhelmed. Standing in the middle of the floor, "Oh!" he cried, the tears glazing his eyes, "am't I an unfortunate crature, this night to be called to do, at my time o' life, what I never

thought I was born to do? Oh!" he gave a lengthened groan, as one of his weeping daughters hung his little pouch across his protruding body—"too tight, Peggy, my love. Anty," to the other who knelt to button his gaiters—"God bless you, Anty!—if I'm never to see you again, Biddy," cautiously accepting his musket from his wife,—“Biddy, you'll take care of 'em if—” his feelings abruptly hurried him out of the room; but he stopped and hesitated at the hall-door, and stopt and hesitated again; framing many excuses to himself for a little respite of time; such as, “he forgot his snuff-box,” or “he wanted to look at the flint of his fire-lock,” or, “he'd just wait while Anty ran up for his nightcap, and thrust it into his pocket;”—but at length he set forth, his wife and children hanging out of the windows to keep him in view as long as he was spared to their sight, and then they sank on chairs, brooding over the soldier's danger.

Sounds of alarm and battle through the town were anxiously listened for, as the signals of his immediate peril. But none such arose. In fact, the intelligence announced by Mr. Jennings's summoners proved a false alarm; and at an advanced hour of the morning he was re-

turned safe and sound to his family. "He's coming, mother!" shouted the daughters, who had been watching him from a garret-window: and, "Aha, Peggy!" he replied, shouting up to his children from a distance, in a gay and triumphant tone—"they were afraid of us, the rascals!"

Hitherto, Eliza had been neglected. In the relief afforded by Mr. Jennings's return, she found herself kindly and officiously attended to. Her wishes were consulted. She was served with tea, that modern and most grateful beverage to the weary, and then ushered to a bed-chamber; where for some time we must leave her, enjoying repose, we hope, while we turn to other matters which nearly concern her.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE little town of Ross is pleasantly, and, for all the purposes of trade and commerce, if either would but come to it, advantageously situated. In fortunate England, it would long ago have been a flourishing and wealthy place; in neglected Ireland, thirty years ago it was, and at the present day it is,—and only give some theorists their way, and at the day of judgment it will still be—a few streets, half alive, with creeping attempts at petty traffic, and encumbered with a suburb of ruinous hovels, which poverty and wretchedness have marked for their own.

About a mile above it, two considerable rivers mingle their waters, and flowing beneath wooded height, or by verdant meadow, form the fine river of Ross, a quarter of a mile broad, almost of equal depth from bank to bank, and

allowing, close to the quays of the town, safe anchorage for vessels of several hundred of tons burden.

Upon every side, hills rise precipitously above the more important streets, such as they are, the suburb climbing with them, often against acclivities so sudden as to render the ascent of the pedestrian a work of much labour. From the opposite bank of the river, when the distance is sufficient to obscure the frequent features of want and ruin in the poorer dwellings, and whence are prominently visible some better structures, the church, and a mass of monastic ruins, mingling with and ennobling the cabins on the hill-side, all relieved by height and slope, meadow and plantation, and having for foreground below, the quay, and a few taper-masted vessels at its side,—a whole picture is presented, which the lovers of landscape would pronounce to be as peculiar as it is pleasing.

Although styled New Ross, the little town claims to be of great antiquity. Four centuries since, it supported more than one monastery; upon the ruins of one of which the Protestant church, at present standing on the hill-side, has been erected. Beneath crumbling aisles,

whence, in other days, floated the evening chant across the broad water, may yet be visited, close to this new place of worship, vaults, wherein lie scattered the blackened bones of the once powerful or revered ministers of an older ritual, whose knowledge, and often whose hands, reared the lofty structure which, destroyed by puritanical hatred more than by the gradual touch of time, now refuses a decent grave to the relics of its ancient masters. And stories are related by local antiquaries of passages under the river to the monastery of Rossbercon, that crowns an opposite hill, and where the paltry steeple of a Roman Catholic chapel bears, to the pile that heretofore occupied its site, even a more humbling comparison in the minds of its visitors, than does the confronting church of the Establishment to the massive ruins with which it so badly groups.

Since 1641, when a battle of some moment was fought near to Ross—and when Cromwell, covering Ireland with desolation and carnage, anticipated time in destroying the pile we have alluded to—war had not visited the present scene of our tale. Partly, perhaps, on that account the artificial defences of Ross had been suffered to decay ; or, as before supposed, may

have been thrown down to allow of the extension of the streets.

Mr. Jennings received Eliza at one of the still-enduring gateways of its old walls; and three similar ones then existed at different points around the town. The complaisant sentinel was on post at the Friary-gate. Another on the hill above, and facing the north, gave entrance, through a thatched outlet, into the main street, which, winding down a long descent, led to the market-house, whence diverged the various other principal streets.

The third gate, also standing on the summit of a hill, fronted the river. High above it, at right angles with the river, clambered, for half a mile's extent, the Irish-town, chiefly composed of the residences of the poorer classes; and here fairs were holden; and here stood the remains of the ancient stone-cross, assigned by Kitty Delouchery as the spot for her meeting with the credulous dragoon; a meeting which, it is scarcely necessary to add, never took place. Whether or not the disappointed soldier adopted her alternative of "cutting it in two wid his soord," may however seem a question; and it is answered in the negative, by stating that the cross can yet be viewed in an un-

severed state; but it is not as positively stated that he did not, in his rage and chagrin, at least make the attempt.

From the last-mentioned gate, the third, the descent into the town was indeed precipitous; requiring, from an inexperienced and unexcited visitor, much cautious watchfulness of his feet.

The fourth gate was situated in the hollow to the North, and only approachable down yet another hill. And rows of houses, running upon the sites of the old defences, or other considerable impediments, denied easy access to the town of Ross, except through these gates.

The reader will soon see the necessity of this description in this place; for amid a scene of quick and fiery action, we could scarce pause to supply it; and yet, in order that he may fully understand that coming scene, it is proper to make him acquainted with the localities of its arena.

Notwithstanding the good omens in which he had returned to his afflicted family, Mr. Jennings was soon obliged to resume his military duties, and starting from a sleep, in which he would willingly have continued till the wars were over, hastened forth in his pinching uni-

form, and shouldering his dreaded weapon, to join, amid real bustle, his watchful corps.

Horse, foot, and artillery came clattering and thundering into the town; and then, with all the importance of men chosen as its defenders, the formidable strangers went from house to house in search of the best quarters, ridiculing those who could not protect themselves, and bullying or threatening such as were suspected of disloyalty. In the course of the day they became variously occupied in defensive preparations. Some deepened the trenches before the old gateways; others grubbed the pavement of the streets ascending to them, in order to facilitate the labour of dragging up cannon, destined to be mounted at those important points; others strengthened the barriers: the companies not so employed underwent inspection by their officers; ammunition was served out to all; and, amid the general clang and uproar, often might be heard the cries of unhappy wretches suffering torture to compel confession of their presumed knowledge of the plans of the insurgents.

As darkness came on, the sounds of preparation increased and deepened, while they varied. Drums beat to arms; the trumpets gave the note of equipment and muster; with brows of

resolute care, the commanders went from post to post ; and as each band prepared to stand to arms for the night, or hastened to an appointed position, levity was discarded from the soldier's carriage.

Scouts brought certain intelligence of the approach of the rude enemy, and before night had fully closed in, a moving black mass, composed of the body of the expected assailants, was seen, from the height called Three-bullet-gate, clustering round a country-seat which stood on an eminence about a mile distant. When they could no longer be observed amid the deepening darkness, their screams of defiance reached the town. And then from the point which had commanded a view of their uncouth muster, guns were discharged against their position, with answer of readiness for encounter ; and igniting their rusty and badly mounted engines with matches of twisted straw, the insurgents broke the gloom around their high encampment with retorted roar and explosion, while again the great shout of twenty thousand men told of anticipated triumph. The garrison they threatened was something more than fifteen hundred strong.

After this interchange of defiance, compara-

tive silence ensued in the little town ; but still there was no relaxation from watchfulness amongst its defenders, and no repose amongst its startled inhabitants. Furious assault being every instant expected, the soldiers stood at their respective positions mute or whispering, or calculating each unusual noise that reached their ears. The people, to whom every thing around them was novel, and whose notions of hostile contention were fearfully vague, experienced torturing suspense. In obedience to the peremptory commands of their protectors, they had extinguished their lights, shut up their dwellings, and assumed the stillness of repose ; but, indeed, only assumed it ; for in every house the inmates crouched together, anticipating the struggle that was to decide their fate ; and often did they interpret the sentinels watchword into the signal of attack, and start and tremble at the measured tread of the patrols.

The night advanced. All remained watchful, anxious, yet undisturbed. And amid this deep pause, two females were cautiously approaching the insurgent position, having escaped, no one knows how, from the jealously-guarded town. By her curious hat, her low, burly figure, and her almost preternatural mode of stumping

along without the least sound, we recognize one of them to be Nanny the Knitter; and the free-moving, erect, and tripping girl at her side, is Kitty Delouchery, sent by our heroine, with Nanny as her companion and ally, and after profound consultations between them all the live-long day, to discover tidings of Sir William Judkin amongst the Wexford Army of Freedom; and, should he fortunately be discovered, to acquaint him with the present situation of his bride.

About four miles distant from Ross is the hill of Carrickburne, one of those rocky elevations for which, as elsewhere mentioned, the County of Wexford is remarkable, and distinguished at a distance by the hard outline its curiously-curving brow describes against the horizon.* And on this

* This hill is also noted as a horrid remembrancer of the times we would illustrate. Beneath its rugged sides, where a patch of soft verdure contrasts with the surrounding barrenness, stood a large barn, used as a prison by the infuriated insurgents, in which a number of human beings, of the two sexes, and of every age, were burnt alive. Whether or not this abominable act is to be visited on the general body of the armed peasants, remains a question. Their historians or apologists deny that it is so, and by their statements we are instructed to seek for the authors of the hideous occurrence amongst the cowardly who had fled from bat-

eminence nearly the whole armed population of the county had lately assembled, and thence did twenty thousand of their body descend and take up, at Corbet-hill,—the name of the country-seat previously mentioned,—their position for the attack of Ross.

The mansion so called was one of some consequence. A lawn, bounded by a semicircular enclosure of trees, sloped to its rear; and another, sheltered at either hand by shadowing screens of foliage, descended from the front-door.

Within less than an hour of dawn, the time at which Nanny the Knitter and Kitty Gow visited this place of encampment, few of the rudely-equipped force remained waking. Still covered solely by the serene summer sky, they stretched in dark masses upon both lawns, to the front and to the rear of the house; their sleep rendered intense by the fatigues of many days and nights, or else by the whiskey they had lately been quaffing, and which formed a considerable part of their commissariat stores;

tle, or the ferocious, who were maddened into revenge by burnings and torturings inflicted on themselves or upon their relatives, or committed a short distance from the site of the memorable barn.

or some more cautious slumberers lay huddled together under the imaginary shelter of the branching trees, or in the ditch, beneath the inclosing fence. And female figures might be distinguished amid this stilly multitude of human beings; and at their feet, or on their bosoms, children and infants; for families frequently slept together in these primitive encampments; and, perhaps, before the armed brother, or husband, or son, disposed himself for repose by their side, he first bent his steps to pull them a couch of green hay from the trodden meadow.

The greater number of the men had sank down, clasping their unburnished guns, or their pikes, closely in their arms, as if the business to be encountered at morning's dawn had formed their last waking thoughts. But many weapons, dropped from less careful hands, strewed the grass; and others stood upright in the sod, having been stuck into it ere their owners lay down to sleep. Ill-fashioned flags, with rude devices, generally green, but often of every other colour, save that of the detested orange, drooped in the breezeless night upon poles fixed in the earth; and these were intended as rallying points for distinct throngs at the

morning's muster. In the middle of the front lawn appeared five or six ill-matched cannon, two of which were tied with ropes to those small rustic cars, peculiar, we believe, to Ireland.

The principal leaders had taken up their quarters in Corbet-Hill House; and the scene described would have been one of almost breathless silence, but that some of their number, the commander-in-chief, as he was called, at their head, yet prolonged, amid disjointed arguments upon the issue of the coming day, vociferation or wild shouts of ebriety, which echoing over the lawns, were the only sounds succeeding to the late cries and clamour of twenty thousand tongues. Nor, indeed, did these few signals of waking, where so many slumbered, take away from the deep effect of general repose, nor derive, from the close presence of the stilled host, any thing to disturb the idea that they bespoke a scene of worse than solitary enjoyment.

As yet unobserved and unquestioned, Nanny and Kitty cautiously approached the avenue that led to the house.

"An' there's no doubt, Nanny, but we'll find him here?" asked Kitty, in a whisper.

"He's here, I'm tould, of a sart'nty, Kitty,

my honey pet ; an' the more 's the pity ;—what 'ill become iv him when the wars is over, I wondher ?”

“ Sure the Croppies 'll gain the day, Nanny.”

“ Ntchee, Ntchee: God help your young head, Kitty, my pet ! no, nor the night, neither. King George 'll have the upper hand, in the long run, as sure as I'm a lump iv a sinner.”

“ Stop, your sowl—listen to that—maybe there 's not friends near us,” said Kitty ; and both listened to the burden of a song, chanted in loud though not unpleasing tones, some short distance in the direction they were taking. After the burden the whole song was gone through, and is here presented, as a genuine specimen of the ballad-making talent of many of the insurgents.

On Owlard-hill the war it begun,
An' its there we gained the North-Cork man's gun ;
To take Enniscorthy then was our intent,
An' we 're the boys that 'll pay no rent.
Sing the-too-rol-lol, fol-the-too-rol-lee,
Fol, lol, lol, fol-the-too-rol-lee !

Long life to Father John, an' long may he reign,
Capt'n Perry also, an' Edmun' Kane,

It's they will win both counthry an' toun,
An' we'll never give up till we pull the Orange down.
Sing, &c.

Come hither, my boys, that never war afraid,
To walk all night wid your green cockade,
Showldher afther me your pike an' gun,
Every one like ould Grawna's son.
Sing, &c.

A loud and long "all's well!" pealed from the singer's throat as he ended his ditty, and was taken up and repeated by many other voices, near and distant, around the encampment; for, in imitation of the more regular force they opposed, the insurgents, catching the watch-word from the near videttes, pushed beyond the gates of Ross, thus endeavoured to manifest their important pretensions to the character of a regular army.

With exulting alertness, Kitty Delouchery tripped forward some paces, and clearing her pipe, chanted in her best key, and that was not a bad one, the following responses to the sentinel's song.

Farewell, my tendher Kitty, it is my cruel fate,
To desert my ruined dwelling, no longer can I wait;

The green flag it is flying, with its harp and shining shield,

An' the Waxford boys, like lions bould, are marching to the field;—

How they shout out to rouse me! and those words they say,

Arise, my Waxford champions, and to victory take your way!

“Success to your pipe, you duck o’ the world!” cried the sentinel, running forward;—
“come here till I take you prisoner, you rogue, you.”

But in some misgiving, Kitty drew back into the shade, as she caught imperfectly a view of the figure that approached. The song, and the tone in which it had been executed, proclaimed Tim Reily; but surely not so did the caparison of the man she now beheld before her.

“Where are you, my darlin’?” he continued; “by the pike in my hand, I’ll have you, supposin’ I run fifty miles a-head!—aha! maybe you think I don’t see you!” he cried, grasping Nanny the Knitter by the shoulder.

“I’m only a poor ould sinner, my honey,”—began Nanny, in her usual formula of petition; the grasp was loosened.

“Och ! tundher-an'-turf ! an' sure I made a mistake : an' it's not nath'ral to me to ketch houl't iv an ould woman, instid iv a young girl, either. Arrah, then, Nanny, wasn't Kitty Delouchery wid you?—I'd swear ten oaths 'twas she gave a purth o' the song I made for her.”

“Hi, hi !” giggled Kitty from her covert, now certain of her man, notwithstanding his very suspicious equipment.

“An' maybe I don't know the manin' o' that,” shouted Tim as he capered to seek her. There was an instant's shuffling under the deep shadow of the trees, which Nanny could not precisely make out ; but after, as she called it, some “hugger-mugger” discourse, she overheard the following conversation.

“Ah, then, for goodness sake, Tim, what sort iv a dhress is that upon you ? I'd lay a bet I seen the likes on some o' King George's sogers.”

“Faix, an' maybe you did ! an' it's a sin an' a shame that the daylight isn't wid us, till you'd see me proper : divil so purthy a hoossian ever your two eyes opened on, a canna.”

“A hoossian !—English me that, Tim, an' I'll say thankee.”

“Why, then, I'll tell you, Kitty, my duck :

them hoossians, they're horse-throopers that's come from far'n parts to fight the poor Crop-pies; an' if you war to hear 'em spakin'!—the likes o' their talk never came out iv a Christhen mouth afore: bud there's one comfort; it isn't Christhen mouths is on their ugly faces; an' they have two whiskers o' beard over their lips; an' they discoorse like born brothers wid their horses; *urragh, vulluck*, they say, an' then the horses makes answer afther the same fashion."

"Sure you're makin' fun, Tim."

"In throth I'm uot, Kitty, bud as downright arnest as ever I was in my life."

"You might asy be that, Tim."

"What matther, a-lanna,—we can't be merry in the grave; so, we'll laugh an' be fat here, on the face o' the livin' yearth. Bud, as I was sayin' to you, them hoossians are great bastes for purshuin' the poor cownthry girls at every hand's turn; an' so, I was comin' along the road, wid the pike in my fist, an' I seen a hoossian ridin' agin me, an' I hid myself to let him pass by; an' the thruth iv a nate purty crature, crossed a stile, at the same time, an' he spurred his horse afther her, an' as they both war comin' near me, I stepped

out, a bit, an' she ran to me, callin' me honest boy, an' axin me to save her; up comes the hoossian gallopin': an' '*ullagh gulluch ghrow fraw thruff*,' says he to myself; '*ulluch, gulluch, gruff*, an' to the ould divil wid you!' says I; an' at the word he reined back his horse, an' made him dance on his hindher legs, that he might have a good slash at me; bud I was afore hand wid him: the pike slipt into the horse's heart, afther a manner it has; ay, an' before he could say *gulluch gruff* to me again, it slipt through his own heart."

"Stout was your fist, Tim: an' so that's the way you got your quare clothes?"

"Faix, an' it is, Kitty! I began to look at him, when I had the time for'id; an', says I to myself, 'isn't this a green jacket an' a green breeches on the baste iv a fellow? an' sure green is the poor Croppy's colour, an' maybe I won't put 'em on my own sef, jest to be like any soger; so I was skinmin' him of the both, when up comes another Croppy, goin' for the camp, too; an', 'I cry halves,' he says; 'Bother!' says I, makin' answer the way he desarved; 'hother, my boy, go an' kill a hoossian for yourself.'"

* An expression really originating from the Insurrection of 1798, and well-known all over Ireland, though

Much more characteristic conversation ensued between them, ere Tim at length thought of inquiring why his mistress was thus rambling at night. But as soon as he ascertained the nature of her mission to "the camp," he at once confirmed Nanny's surmises that Sir William was at present amongst the insurgent force on the height; and only stipulating that so long as they remained unobserved, his protecting arm should encircle her waist—(Nanny was not, and indeed did not consider herself a critic from whom any such little freedom ought to be disguised,)—Tim then led Kitty in search of the Baronet; the reflections that his young mistress was thereby to be served, adding energy to his zeal.

While the great throng assembled for the assault of Ross lay sunk in deepest sleep, and while the most convivial of their captains prolonged their midnight revelry, there was one who neither sought to share the oblivious slumbers of the first, nor the care-drowning libations of the others. With arms folded hard across his body, he paced up and down before the

for the first time traced to its real source; indeed, it has become a bye-word in the sister-island; tantamount, to "win gold and wear it."

door of Corbet-hill House; and sometimes he would pause, and seemingly after a moment's thought stamp violently with either foot, and again resume his hurried and irregular strides.

"If I'm not a blind man, Kitty, my duck; an' sure, if I was, you wouldn't be dyin' in love wid me as you are; there's the gintleman you want," said Tim Reilly.

"Faix, my honey, it's him, sure enough! make up to him, both o' ye, an' tell him your arrand; becase I'd rather o' the two not to go near him," remarked Nanny.

"Why so, Nanny?" asked Kitty.

"He hasn't a likin' for me, I believe; he was oncet goin' to toss my poor lump iv a body out iv a windee, an' that 'ud be the death o' me, there's no doubt."

Tim and Kitty approached Sir William. He seemed unconscious of their presence until Tim accosted him.

"Here's a purty little girl, your honour," holding Kitty by the arm.

"What does ~~she~~ want, fellow?" questioned the Baronet, stopping suddenly, and speaking so vehemently that both reeled backward.

"She only wants to be spakin' vid your honour," resumed Tim, in a voice of humility.

“Pitch her to the thousand furies!” cried Sir William; “she and all of her sex—and, begone, scoundrel!”

“Pitch her where?” muttered Tim, closing his fingers on his pike-handle; “show me the man that ’ll pitch her anywhere, half a quarter iv a yard, an’ he won’t be thankful for his throuble.”

“Never heed the poor young gentleman, Tim; he’s cracked vid his thrials, an’ doesn’t know what he’s sayin’,” whispered Kitty.

“Threu for you, Kitty; bud I forgot it when he talked o’ doin’ any thing to you.”

“Tim is only comin’ to tell your honour where to find the poor young misthress,” resumed Kitty.

“Hal!” Sir William again stopped and eagerly fixed his eyes on them,—“where to find Lady Judkin, you mean?”

“Yes, Sir; my lady is in an honest house in the town, there below, an’ longin’ in her heart to see your honour.”

“Lead me thither instantly!” he spoke in high exultation, striking his hands together.

The impossibility of getting into Ross unobserved now that the day had begun to break, was stated to him by Kitty and Tim, in a breath,

“ But,” continued Kitty,” when the night comes again, I ’ll lade your honour, by a way I know, to the very house, an’ into the house, more be token.”

“ Faith, we ’ll all be in Ross town afore the next night, Kitty—or what did we come here for ?” said Tim.

“ True, my lad ! true ! ay—before the sun is two hours over the hills !” he rushed from them to the door of the house. “ Come ! I’ll live a day yet, and perhaps not in vain !—enjoyment—triumph—revenge—then, death the next instant, and I can laugh in his face in my last gasp !”

He broke into the house ; he announced the morning light to the scarce^{ly} sober leaders ; he ran out from them, first to the front, and then to the back lawn, and shouted away the sleep from the yet slumbering multitude ; and with the earliest blush of a lovely morning, all was stir and bustle, where but a moment previously all had been forgetfulness and silence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE banners were quickly snatched up, and their bearers, waving them to and fro, loudly repeated the names of the parishes to which each belonged, as the shortest method of mustering their followers; and in broken groups the natives of different districts rushed to obey the summons. The principal leaders mounted their horses; amongst them the dingy sables of four priests appearing oddly contrasted with their martial weapons.

The person who had been appointed commander-in-chief, and who was a Protestant gentleman of considerable property in the country, and much deficient, by the way, in the mental endowments necessary for his new station, began, according to previous plans, to divide his forces for the attack, when Sir William Judkin observed a horseman, bearing a

white handkerchief on a pole, prepare to set out towards the town. He guessed his purpose.

"You go with a flag of parley, Sir?"

"With a summons to surrender, Sir William; which, if they 're wise, they 'il listen to."

"I am with you, if you do not object."

"'Tis a mission of some danger; but your company is welcome, since you offer."

Sir William thanked this person, who seemed a man somewhat above the middle rank. A green ribbon round his hat, and another crossing his shoulder, bespoke a leader of importance; and a brace of pistols, and a sheathed sabre, most probably the spoils of conquest, were thrust into a strap that encircled his waist.

At a brisk pace they advanced to the town. They were within a quarter of a mile of one of the gates, and could see the soldiers drawn out before the barriers, as they had been stationed during the night, ready for encounter.

"Halt, and give the counter-sign!" cried a sentinel in advance.

"A flag to your general," answered the herald, waving his emblem of office. Almost before he heard the explosion that sent the bullet through his brain, he fell dead from his

saddle. Sir William fired in return, missed his man, and then galloped back, while a volley from the line that covered the gate followed his retreat ; and as he rode up to Corbet-hill House, he could see that many balls which had missed and passed him, had made corses among the stragglers at the bottom of the eminence.

“ Where’s my masther, Sir ?” cried a strippling of sixteen, catching at his bridle as he rode on : “ where’s Mr. Furlong, that went wid the flag ?”

“ Shot, my man !” and Sir William broke from him, but not before he heard—

“ Why, then, may the Orange conquer us ! bud I’ll have the best blood among ’em for my masther’s ;” and the lad, peering at the flint of his pistol, mingled with the crowd.

It had been loosely planned by the leaders, while inspired by the libations of the preceding night, that their force should be divided into three bodies, destined to assault Ross, simultaneously, at three distinct points. But the attempt to carry this resolution into effect was attended with no little difficulty. They were, in truth, but the heads of a mob, yet unreduced to any thing like order, yet unconscious of good to be derived from previous arrangement, and

who could form no idea of attack, save that inspired by wild impulse, and obeyed by one furious rush upon their foes. When, therefore, the captains spoke of precaution, and of a plan, they were only understood to be actuated by doubts of success as to the issue of a bold onset; and a vague notion of danger, already apprehended, began to pervade the assemblage.

The leaders themselves, mostly pushed into reputation and ascendancy by the personal prowess that urged them to head their followers through the thickest danger, and otherwise unfitted for command, proved as incompetent to execute their purpose, as did the rude force to understand it. A necessity for a divided yet regular attack had been half-impressed on their minds, but they came to their preparatory task without reflection, and consequently could not apply themselves to arranging, in detail, the crude materials which were to be directed to their object.

When Sir William Judkin approached the position he had just left, the attempted preparations for the coming fight produced therefore such a scene of tumult, as already boded the impracticability of acting upon any cool plan. The commanders vociferated their orders often

different to one and the same band ; or cursed, or imprecated, or used violence to enforce them ; the men as loudly exhorted each other, or rejected the authority which enjoined movements they could not comprehend, or were afraid to obey. Mingling and hustling, and dividing, and mingling again, the unmanageable mass wavered over the brow of the eminence ; while from the out-posts of their watchful enemies, well-directed volleys often brought down numbers amongst them, increasing, doubtless, the general disinclination to onset.

At this moment Sir William Judkin spurred into the middle of the concourse.

“ All accommodation is at an end ! ” he shouted. “ Your flag has been insulted !—your messenger shot by my side ! down upon them, Wexford boys ! if only for revenge ! ”

This appeal, seeming to advise the only mode of proceeding that could be relished, partially supplied the impulse that was wanted. The motive for immediate vengeance passed from tongue to tongue ; a resolved and desperate shout followed ; as if by general assent, a great number flung aside their coats, shoes, and stockings ; and before the uncombined movement could be checked, seven thousand screaming

men, those with fire-arms leading the van, while the black-headed pikes bristled high over the heads of their main body, were rushing down the hill upon Ross.

Confusion and dismay ensued amongst the chief leaders, left behind, with nearly two-thirds of their whole force. All their plans were thus accidentally disarranged, and they stood powerless. The person called commander-in-chief exerted his voice to arrest the progress of the impetuous detachment ; but he was not heeded. Some of his inferior officers, seeing it useless to remonstrate any longer, hastened down from Corbet-hill, to place themselves at the head of those whom they could not control. Others, still hoping to connect with the sudden diversion, a simultaneous attack upon the town, at three points, laboured to divide and separately to direct the great body around them. But their agitation and unassured manner quickly communicated itself to their followers ; their want of judicious method added to the impression ; and, at the ill-judged cry of " Down, Wexford men, or all is lost !" they were left almost alone on the height, the distracted mob flying with their backs to Ross : so that of twenty thousand, destined the previous evening to seize up-

on the town, little more than eight thousand engaged in the affair.

And at the head of these eight thousand, driven onward by his seconders, rather than leading them, did Sir William Judkin now spur his horse.

The mad shouts of the assailants sank into silent purpose, as they drove through the way leading to the verge of the descent, at the bottom of which Ross was situated. The advanced sentinels fled before them. They heard the gallop of horse coming on. They paused. Dragoons swept around a curve of the road, charging at a gallop. With a renewed yell the insurgents rushed to meet them. Fire-arms were discharged on both sides; numbers of the peasant force fell; but they pressed over the bodies of their companions, now showing a front of pikes. Again the dragoons fired, and then wheeled round, and rapidly retreated. Their foes quickened their tramp to a race.

The horsemen, in sweeping upon the town, dispirited, by their flight, the advanced body of infantry at the gate, who faced about, not waiting the assailants. Sir William Judkin saw his men come close upon the entrenched and barricaded entrance. Here, cannon opened

upon them, each shot making a path through the thickly-wedged mass, and promising to protect the dragoons who, hard pressed by bare-footed foes, almost as fleet as the beasts they bestrode, and not able to cross the deep trench before them, wheeled to the right, down a narrow way, leading into the centre of the suburb before described as stretching from the fair gate up the heights over the town.

“ Surround them in the *Boreen-na-Slanagh!*” shouted Sir William;—and being answered by a fierce cry, he led part of his adherents over a fence near at hand, and was followed at a speed that put his horse to his mettle.

The result answered his expectations. He and his detachment were on the narrow road before the dragoons; the remaining force pressed the horsemen in the rear.

“ Now, my boys, no quarter! some of them are Talbot’s hangmen!”

His advice was scarcely necessary. The dragoons could but once draw their triggers, when, except two, who broke in desperation through the throng, and galloped, at peril of their necks, down almost a precipice into the town, they were piked to death in a few

minutes. Even their horses, as if identified with themselves, shared the hate, the rage, and the deadly thrusts which so quickly dispatched the riders. And while still engaged in their work of slaughter, the exulting yells of the victors rang with ominous effect through the town below.

“To the Three-bullet-gate, my gallant boys !” again cheered their young leader, and again an answering shout prefaced their return to that important point : and they bounded upward with unslackened speed.

The cannon did not now roar at them, as a second time they thronged to its mouth. An officer, visibly of rank,—a commander of title, indeed,—appeared on horseback between them and the trench, waving his sword in token of parley. The insurgent body suddenly halted close to him.

“What is it you seek, my lads ?” he began, and while he spoke, a bare-legged boy advanced closer than the others, as if stupidly attending to his address : “why do you thus foolishly oppose the King’s forees ? state your demands to me, and if a compromise can be effected, we will avoid the shedding of blood—”

Ere the last words were wafted from his lips,

the stripling's aspect changed into the fierce wildness of the tiger's, as, snatching a pistol from his bosom, he shot the noble mediator through the heart, who instantly tumbled into the trench.

"Now, masther, there's a life for your life!" cried the young assassin, bounding high in ecstacy: "it wasn't to see you killed widout a life for id, that you brought me up undher your roof."

The field-pieces on the trench flashed and bellowed; the infantry drawn up behind it sent in their accompanying volleys; guns from the hill-side within the town supported both; and numbers of the insurgent throngs paid forfeit for the much-regretted (and still-regretted) life thus treacherously taken.

But the maddened assailants, mounting upon the heaps of slain which rapidly filled the trench, only redoubled their efforts to possess the gate. They were repulsed three times, steadily, and with great loss. A fourth time had the gunners loaded to sweep back a fourth assault, and their matches were approaching the guns, when from a wall to the right of the gate, and to which the trench ran, jumped a band of almost naked men, who to gain this

point had taken an unobserved circuit. Before they could be aware of their danger, the cannoneers lay stretched under their carriages; and in another instant the guns were wheeled round and discharged upon their own infantry. At the same time, the main force of the insurgents easily crossed the trench, over the dead bodies that filled it, and, pike in hand, followed up the unexpected salute by a charge. Their fury, their numbers, and their fearful weapon, could not be resisted; and as the retreating soldiers descended the steep street into the middle of the town, the cannon was once more discharged upon them. The screaming foe sprang down in pursuit, sometimes checked by a murderous volley sent up from the infantry, who would momentarily pause and face round to give it; sometimes by the bayonet, which, with little chance of success, clashed against the pike.

Besides those who entered by the gate, numbers came pouring down the hilly suburb and streets that faced the river; and whenever a musket flashed, they sprang to its muzzle, still shouting at death, and overwhelming opposition. They gained the outskirts of the lower and principal part of the town, where stood the

market-house, a building with open arches below, and with public-rooms overhead, surmounted by a cupola.

Here almost the whole remaining garrison had become concentrated ; and here was the sturdiest struggle. Even as the assailants rushed down the street which led to this little citadel, volley after volley still thinned their ranks ; at a closer approach, cannon again blasted showers of shot upon them from beneath the arches, and from every window overhead the glittering tubes of infantry well seconded the larger engines ; while between each pause of the fire, horsemen charged against the rushing concourse. The contest gradually became astounding. In answer to the harsh and incessant explosions of musketry, and the bellowing of the guns, the insurgents sent back their hoarse yet tremendous shouts : over heaps and heaps of their own slain they continued to bound, always driving back the dragoons ; and to eke out the din and the fury of the scene, the crackling and roar of burning dwellings, and the shivering of windows by ball, or by the exploding air within, soon began to be heard, and the smoke of conflagration mingled with that of the hot engagement.

And amid this scene was the fate of Eliza Hartley to be decided.

She stood in an open window of Mr. Jennings's house, near to the market-place, but out of range of the volleys thence sent forth, endeavouring to catch, through the clamour of human voices which added to the general roar and clang, one accent of one voice that it would have been joy to hear, and to select from amongst the dense phalanx of insurgents, the figure of one individual for whose safety her prayers fervently petitioned Heaven.

A horseman spurred his jaded horse up an unencumbered street towards her.

"It's he, my lady!" shouted Kitty Delouchery, who stood by her side; and the girl quickly descended to admit Sir William Judkin, while Eliza extended her arms towards her husband. She saw him halt, look up, brush his bloody hand across his forehead and eyes, as if to clear his vision, look up again, and then he took off his hat, and waved it.

"Hasten!" cried Eliza. "Beloved!" he shouted in reply, and spurred to the door.

"Oh, hasten, hasten!"—repeated Eliza, as another horseman, whom previously her anxious eye had caught, closed on Sir William,

darting the rowels into his' steed until, at each spring forward, the animal's hoofs struck sparkles from the pavement.

"Turn, rebel!—turn from that house!"—exclaimed the pursuer, in the well-known tones of Talbot. His sabre was bared and raised, almost over his rival's head."

"My husband! spare my husband!" cried Eliza; but she was unheard amid the din around her, or, if heard, unheeded by the ears to which she addressed herself. Sir William wheeled about; and, distinct from every other sound of strife, she caught his screaming accents.

"By the heavens, this is sweet! My love and my triumph together!"—

Eliza leaned from the window, unconscious of danger, for she saw but two persons in deadly conflict, where thousands were striking for each other's heart's-blood. The arms were stretched forward, and, at first, her hands remained apart, but suddenly she struck them together, her fingers entwined, her white lips parted, her rounded eyes seemed as if they would fly to the objects that fascinated them, and her unequal breath, previously kept in,

escaped slowly, as if fearful to disturb her eager watchfulness.

Sir William was armed with a rude weapon ; it had been a pike, but the handle had become shivered, leaving it no more than about four feet in length, of which the blade was nearly two. Holding this in his bridle-hand, he drew a pistol with his right, and fired. The ball whizzed harmlessly. He changed the fragment of a pike from one hand to the other, and raising it high, spurred against his watchful opponent. By adroitly wheeling round, Talbot scarce avoided the deadly thrust, while with the force of his onset, Sir William past him, losing his weapon. Then Eliza saw her dreaded enemy approach within a few feet of her defenceless husband, and deliberately aiming at his knee, indeed almost pressing the muzzle of the pistol to the joint, pulled the trigger. The ball seemed to have maimed the horse as well as the rider, for both tumbled on the street, and became entangled, until the plunging animal rolled over Sir William, apparently crushing him to death. Then came a shout more deafening than any that had preceded it ; her failing eyes beheld a body of routed horse driven past the door of the house by a throng

of half-naked men; they galloped over the prostrate Sir William; they made a momentary stand; they discharged their carbines; the insurgents closed with them; heaps of dead bodies, men and horses, arose above her husband and his steed; the discomfited dragoons again fled; the charging pikemen yelled and raced after them; Eliza gave a faint cry; the rush, and the shout, and the explosion faded from her sense; and she fell into Kitty Delouchery's arms.

The insurgents drove the main force of the garrison out of the town of Ross. Over the wooden-bridge that spans its broad river, horse, foot, and artillery rushed together, and ascending the hill at the opposite side, were lost to view. The long, winding street leading from the gateway where the attack had begun, was strewed with slain, ten insurgents for one of the King's troops, making up the number of the slaughtered. Upon the height, over the town, springs a little stream of limpid water, falling in transparent spouts, at different intervals, from basin to basin, until it reaches the lower streets; and this constantly running streamlet was discoloured with blood. Yet were the insurgents victors; or at least, it was

only needful for them to act upon the advantages already gained, in order really to command that name. The handful of infantry, and the few cannon which yet remained, rather out of necessity than as opponents, in the market-house, presented an easy conquest.

But the undisciplined and riotous mob, bellowing amid the carnage of their companions, broke into the houses, seized upon whatever liquor they could find, and in the fever of intoxication, forgot that they were yet exposed to a reverse of fortune.

An inhabitant of the town followed the retreating army, and informed its officers that their ferocious foes had already become changed into a powerless rabble. The officers returned to the height commanding the town to reconnoitre. They saw the flames of burning houses ascending at different points, but the flag of England yet fluttered over the barracks; and instead of the ferocious shout of wild carnage, the less frequent scream of drunkenness arose from the principal streets. At intervals, too, the discharge of artillery and musketry from the market-house, directed against some faint and reeling attack, told that Ross might yet be recovered.

The defeated force rallied. The militia regiment, whose Colonel had been killed by the revengeful stripling, thirsted for a renewed engagement; their spirit became diffused through every bosom; all descended towards the river; and horses, men, and cannon once more thundered over the wooden-bridge.

The conquerors were dispersed in all the confusion and riot of inebriety. As the drums beat, and the trumpets blew, and the rolling volleys again made havoc among them, some hastily snatched their arms; but numbers, unable to make the slightest opposition, fell easy and merited victims to the thrusting bayonet, the dragoon's sabre, or the trampling hoofs of his horse. Separate bands encountered detachments of the soldiers at every corner of the streets, and in every alley; and amid sudden shouts, and rush, and encounter, the contention was as desultory as it was bloody.

In a short time, all of the insurgents who could wield a weapon, forced their way to the end of the street, down which they had driven their opponents in the morning. Two squares of the market-house commanded them in this situation; additional cannon rattled to its arches; and from beneath the shivering building volleys

of grape-shot still made roads through their diminished throngs, while upon all sides combined discharges of musketry told with almost equal effect. Wherever, in the pauses between the explosions, horsemen charged through the openings thus cleared in the insurgent mass, the despairing men still evinced, however dangerous, courage, driving their assaulters pell-mell back upon the infantry and artillery, and following, while they dealt death around, to the very mouths of the guns, whence they were blown piecemeal along the streets, until the heaped dead made farther approach to the market-house difficult. Those who bore fire-arms loaded and fired while they retained a charge of powder and ball, and then handing their pieces to their women, received pikes in return, and sought desperately to continue the contest. But unable to come to close quarters, and after having stood repeated discharges of cannon, and of every kind of lesser engine, they at length retreated up the ascending street, with a celerity too rapid for regular pursuit, leaving nearly a-third of their body dead behind them, and thus abandoning the conquest they had sacrificed so much to achieve.

CHAPTER X.

MANY were the scenes of terror in the streets of Ross after the departure of the furious foe ; but of all such, two principally concern the story.

Upon the spot where Eliza had seen her husband fall, buried beneath his own plunging horse and a pile of slain, appeared a woman and a man, both busily employed in turning over the dead bodies.

“ Here the young rascal lies !” said the man, in a ruffianly tone ; “ bud we must get him from undher the horse.”

“ Is he dead ?” asked the woman solemnly.

“ The best o’ the two is dead,” she was answered ; “ the good horse is kilt outright, bud there’s a gasp in him yet.”

“ Whoever you are,” Sir William Judkin feebly cried, “ you torture me ;—hold ! hold !”

as they endeavoured to free him of the stiffened animal whose carcass lay across his thigh—"my arm is broken, and this limb is shattered."

"Hah!" said the woman, as if communing with herself—"gay and sonorous accents of days gone by; is it to this ye are ehanged?" then addressing Sir William—"Do you know me?" she asked.

"Touch me not, fiend!" he screamed aloud.

"At last you are mine!" she resumed; "yes, mine; in my power, at my mercy, to deal with you as I like: this is no place or time for our last converse,—but there is a silent and a fit spot where we shall speak together, where none shall break in upon our dialogue, where no sound shall interrupt our words, and yet where we shall come to a reckoning before meet witnesses. Raise him," she said, addressing Bill Nale; "is your comrade at hand to assist you?"

"No, by the living farmer! God be wid you, poor Sam! one o' the greatest mistakes o' this day, however it come to pass, was to let the hemp that was growin' for you wait for a betther man,—bud no matther; there's one 'ill help me at the corner o' the next sthreet, instid

o' him ; one that, since he hard tell o' the thricks o' this youth, 'ud lend him any helpin' hand we may want."

" You mean John Delonchery ?"

" Or a body very much like him."

" Come then," and she assisted with her own hands in bearing the now insensible Sir William to the spot where Shawn-a-Gow waited for them ; and then all gained the height above the town with their nearly lifeless burden, entered the church-yard, and descended to the dripping vaults beneath the ruined monastery.

" Lay him here," said the woman—" here, amid the reliques of the dead and gone, let him commune in solitude with these rattling bones ; at the proper time ye know whither he is to be conveyed ; meanwhile, I have something to do," and again she bent her steps towards the lower town.

As she strode through the streets leading from Three-bullet-gate to the market-house, a number of yeoman-cavalry were galloping down its steep descent, after a last discomfited charge upon the retreating insurgents. The men, many of them wounded, appeared in much disorder, and their officers' voices were heard high in reproach. The woman paused an instant,

glanced observantly and eagerly from one to another of the officers, and then darted like an arrow through the horses, and seized Captain Talbot's bridle.

"Will you save Eliza Hartley from destruction?" she asked, looking up into his haggard face.

"How? where—what do you mean?"

"Look!" she answered, pointing to Mr. Jennings's house, which was in flames; "they have left her in it alone—Shawn-a-Gow forced off his daughter from the door—all fled for safety, and she was forgotten: you must brave fire and smoke to save her—you may perish with her, but there *is* a chance yet—a slight one—and you, and only you will take that chance for Eliza Hartley's sake!"

"Two of you follow me," said Talbot, speaking to the men by his side; and he spurred over the dead and wounded, staining the fetlocks of his horse with blood. The woman quickened her pace to keep him in view. Flames were bursting through the lower windows, and through the door of Mr. Jennings's house, throwing a glare even into the broad day; the crackle of wood within told the farther progress of the fierce element, and

smoke which rushed from the shivering windows of the first story, warned the spectators that through them also it would soon shoot forth.

At the garret-window, built upon the unpapeted roof, stood Eliza Hartley, indistinctly seen, even in her high situation, amid the curling smoke. Her piercing shrieks sounded the agony of her despair; the prospect of a shocking death, distinctly beheld in its terrible advances, inspired even her wretched heart with the instinct for life. There was no time for deliberation. Talbot, aided by his daring companions, quickly disencumbered himself of his accoutrements, jacket and boots, and then stood upon his saddle, under one of the windows of the first story, endeavouring to balance his agitated limbs for a bound. The female held the bridle of his trembling steed, and covered his eyes with the adventurer's jacket, that he might not see the rushing flames which now almost enveloped him. After a few seconds, Talbot stood firmly on the animal's back, his eyes fixed on the window-stool. He couched himself, darted upward, grasped his object, stood upon it; his scorched and terrified horse broke away, and galloped down the street. An instant he paused for breath, perhaps for

resolution, as he looked into the room within ; then he dashed through the window, which was shut down, shattering its frame and remaining glass, disappeared, and, simultaneously, a red column burst out from the opening thus made. Those below looked on in breathless silence. They were startled by a crash, evidently caused by the falling in of the floor of the apartment he had just entered.

“Lost together !” exclaimed the woman who had urged him to this desperate attempt. The men of his corps, and a crowd of other persons, groaned an assent to her words. But looking up to the garret where Eliza had first appeared, as her renewed shrieks challenged their attention, they saw his blackened figure supporting what seemed now to be the lifeless body of our heroine, for her head drooped over his shoulder, and her arms swung without voluntary action. He spoke, he roared, but little more than the movement of his lips and the working of his features could be caught amid the overmastering roar of the flames. He waved his disengaged arm violently, but the yeomen did not understand his gestures. The female, however, seemed to have done so, for she disappeared from amongst them.

Flashes began to quiver in the room at the backs of Talbot and Eliza, and accumulating volumes of smoke almost hid them from view. The men, in loud and afflicted accents, anticipated every instant the falling in of the second and only remaining floor of the house. They shouted loud, but as much in despair as in applause, when they saw him, still clasping Eliza, issue from the window, and stand on the slates at its edge, while one hand clung to its pointed top. Some had run for a ladder, as the only means of rescue that occurred to them; others screamed for those to return with it.

Five minutes more, and they 're gone!" said one of the yeomen—"but look there—see the woman coming out through the skylight on the next roof! an' she's making way to them!—that's brave, that's brave!"

"She's a fearless woman," said another—"I'd face the Croppies' pikes once again, sooner than venture along them slates."

The roof of the adjoining house had not indeed, any more than Mr. Jennings', a protecting parapet; yet along its smooth slope the female continued to direct her course. A rope, secured or held tight by some persons within the skylight, was passed round her body, and she held

in her hand some sharp-edged instrument, with which she broke away the slates to make resting-places for her feet previous to each step she took.

She gained the spot where the swarth figure of Talbot yet remained, barely visible. The hushed spectators saw her admonish him by gestures to hold her skirts with the hand that clung to the last window-top of the nearly consumed house. Thick clouds of smoke wrapped both. When for an instant it was wafted aside, she and he appeared half-way across the adjacent roof, the woman leading, propped upon her sharp instrument, at every cautious and lengthened step; Talbot, as she had exhorted him to do, guiding himself by touching her garments, while the senseless Eliza still rested on his right shoulder; and it was evident that judicious hands within gradually drew the rope tight, as the female, to whose body it attached, came near and nearer to them, so as to afford her additional support and confidence on her perilous return to the open skylight.

Those below, silent and aghast, thrilled to see her and Talbot's progress over the shelving and slippery surface, from which one false step had harled all to certain death. Their feelings un-

derwent strong excitement between joy at the escape from the flames, fear of the peril yet unpassed, and admiration of the courage and presence of mind of Talbot and his ally. Sometimes loose slates fell into the street, and they were ready to cry out in terror and lamentation, but still the bold adventurers appeared safe, and still the crowd was silent. In a few seconds all suspense ended. The woman gained the opening in the roof, disappeared through it, reached out her arms to relieve Talbot of his burden, received the unconscious Eliza, and then Talbot plunged after both, and the breathless pause below was broken by a heart-stirring cheer.

They were shortly in the lower part of the house, which already had begun to catch fire.

“You have shown yourself a brave and a bold man,” said the woman, addressing her companion, while he staggered and stared around him, now but half conscious of what had occurred.

“Heavenly Powers! is she safe? have we indeed snatched her from the dreadful flames?—where are we?—how came I here?—is she saved?—where is she?”

“In your arms,” said the female.

With a faint cry of joy he bent his eyes on Eliza's pallid face.

"Fear not," resumed his companion, as she saw him start, "'tis but a swoon."

He dropped on his knees. "Almighty Providence! the thanks and the praise to Thee! Thy hand alone could have guided us!" He drooped his head over his mistress's bosom, and wept aloud.

When Eliza regained imperfect sense, she became half aware that she sat in a carriage supported by a woman, but by whom she did not raise her head nor open her lips to ask. The different horrors she had that day experienced, vaguely blended together in her mind, kept her stunned and silent. The vehicle proceeded towards its destination, and she would not even inquire whither it bore her, for in truth she cared not whither. It reached, without her observation, the house, near to Dunbrody, from which, by Nanny's agency, she had so lately escaped. She was helped out of it, and accompanied by her fellow-traveller, and guided by Mrs. Nelly, and bowed to by Robert as she went along, gained her former chamber, still unconscious of her situation. A bed appeared before her and she sank on it.

Mrs. Nelly's obsequious lamentations filled her ears, and gradually produced recollection. She raised herself, looked around, recognized the kneeling attendant, and in the person of the woman by her side, the bearer of the first letter from her father, and with a shriek she swooned again.

After this, her mind had dim glimpses of alternate consciousness and insensibility; and when at length, in consequence of generous restoratives, she could take a renewed and steady glance around, the shades of evening were in her chamber, and surrounded by them, where they deepened under a fold of the bed-furniture, sat the strange woman, silent and motionless, the hood of her dark cloak drawn over her features. Mrs. Nelly was no longer visible.

"Impostor! deceitful creature! leave me!" were the first words which, in a return of sickening sensations, Eliza uttered.

"How am I an impostor?" asked the female in her former controlled voice.

"How! knew you not the pretended letter you brought me was a forgery?"

"I knew, and I *know*, it was *not* a forgery!"

"And knew you not that my father,—oh

merciful Heaven! leave me,—I can speak no farther with you.”

“You must speak farther with me. I guess what you would utter. You would tell me, that upon the night of your escape from the inn, I conducted you to another impostor, and not to your father.”

Eliza, hiding her face, only groaned her answer.

“And still you would err in telling me so. Upon that little bridge, your father indeed met you; and here, in this house, this night, he will himself confirm my story!”

“Gracious God! can I believe you? why should you deceive me again? What do you mean?—my father alive, coming hither to-night! how can that be? oh, how, indeed!—cruel, torturing woman! is not the fact of his death well known to the world, since that very night?”

“Well, believed by the world; yet he lives. A friendly hand, allowing his enemies to deem him led to his fate, saved her father for Eliza Hartley.”

“Ay! so your letter said—but how saved him?”

“In order to be left uncontrolled arbiter of his life or death—indeed, almost to cause him-

self to be appointed Sir Thomas's executioner—that friend assumed the utmost appearance of party zeal and bigotry against your father, excluded his witnesses, denied yourself access to his dungeon, was accordingly appointed superintendent of the execution, and thus, with the assistance of one trusty follower, another condemned rebel, in the depth of night, and while the guards stood at a distance, mounted the ladder of the gallows upon which your parent was doomed to suffer, and upon which, as you say, it is believed, he has suffered.”

At parts of this statement Eliza started repeatedly; and when it was ended—“What!” she cried, in a tone of bitter mockery, “excluded witnesses—denied me access! who? who did this? who dare you assert did it?”

“Dare? Use no such words to me. Henry Talbot was that friend.”

“Wretch! false wretch!” laughed Eliza—“I guessed your hero. Ay, this is following up the insidious views of your forged letter, heaping lie upon lie!”

“Peace!” in turn cried her companion, rising, and using a tone different from her former subdued one, at which Eliza again started: “Peace, I say! and have a care how you insult

me, Eliza Hartley : look better at me, first :” she dropped her cloak, and appeared in a gown of black silk, deeply edged and flounced with crape ; her face was emaciated and pale as death, and her black locks, uncurled, and indeed wholly undressed, hung thickly by each cheek—“ Do you not remember me, Eliza ?” she continued, advancing to the bed, stooping over Eliza, till their eyes met, and now speaking in a cadence of heart-broken and despairing wretchedness.

Eliza half-breathed the name of which the faded and altered features only doubtfully reminded her.

“ Yes,” said Belinda St. John, “ you look upon all that suffering and passion have left of your schoolfellow. And may I not take this innocent hand, and while in my own name I reassure you that your father lives, still hold it in friendship ? ’twould be a balm.”

Eliza, overpowered, as well by thick-coming convictions, as by the sight of the miserable being before her, answered by clasping both the hands of her former bosom-friend, and bursting into tears.

“ I am glad of that, Eliza ; I am glad to see you weep, it will do you good ; I wish I could

shed tears, too ; but they have not flowed since last I saw you. But no, I would not weep, if I could. It might soften my heart from its purpose. And I have that to do, and soon, which was never done with a weeping eye. 'The heart must be stern and stony, the eye must be dry and hot, else would the hand fail.'

"Belinda !—oh, my poor Belinda !"—Eliza was again obliged to pause, giving way to a fresh burst : after some time she resumed,—
"I cannot say, Belinda, whether your words surprise, or delight, or terrify me most ; yes, now I believe that my beloved father can again be clasped to my heart ; but—" and she stopped, shuddered, and spoke faintly—"but, if so, I must believe the whole of that terrible letter—"

"Yes ; when I am here to vouch it also—did not your father promise you should receive a confirmation from my own lips ?"

"Yes—no—he only said—"

"That Judkin's victim would visit you ; I am that most wretched, most wronged, and yet unavenged woman !"

"And you and he had met before your coming to my father's house ?" groaned Eliza, hiding her face.

“ Yes: it was of him I spoke to you in your father’s house. Yes; long before that we had met, although then he had not inflicted the last injury. And it was to place myself in his way I came to Hartley Court, and remained in it, and, at the dead hour of night, often left it to wander about his mansion, hoping to meet him by chance; for I feared that, hearing of my visit to you, he but feigned absence from home, and in this manner I expected to confront and confound him. But I truly ascertained that he was in Waterford, on business; and upon the very night when I received my intelligence, thither I went, and—you have read your father’s letter—we met at last.

“ Eliza, by the written communication soliciting advice upon the waving state of your heart, I at first learned the treachery of our common deceiver; and I will own that, while brooding over it, without attempting to answer it, my blood boiled against you, and my passion urged some dreadful punishment for the siren who had robbed me of happiness—of hope. Yet do not now shrink from me. It was but the dark impulse of a moment, soon forgotten in recollections of your unconsciousness of injury, and of our early and sweet friendship—nay, in pity

for you, left at the merey of a man so merciless. And believe me, Eliza Hartley, that, through all I have since suffered and done, the sense of my own maddening injuries scarce weighed with me more than did an ardent desire for your preservation. Let that truth become fixed in your mind—in your heart. I strongly wish you to feel convinced of the service I have rendered you. This is the last time we can ever converse together; the hour is at hand which may end my life, while it rights my wrongs—I do not think I can outlive it—I do not think I ought; and I hope to part from you as friends should part. For after all it is a wretched, a desolate fate to plunge into the grave without one eye left behind to shed a tear upon its eternal cover. Tell me, therefore, in your gentle voice, and press my hand while you tell it, that when looking down upon my wreck you will compassionate, and feel grateful to, the hopeless Belinda St. John—to her, who in working out her own dread doom, saved her friend from despair and pollution.”

Eliza, again deeply affected, replied to this appeal in such a manner as gave evident relief to the unhappy woman. “And oh! Belinda,” she continued—“why was I not made ac-

quainted with the name of your undoer at the time, when, in consequence of such information, the greater portion of what we have both since suffered might have been prevented?"

"You mean, when I saw you at Hartley Court? I will candidly answer your question. Fallacious hope and my strong pride suggested that, although diverted from his former views by passing admiration of your sparkling charms, he might still be won back by endearment, or else by determined remonstrance, at least to do me the poor justice I claimed at his hands—in fact, to become my protector—my husband—the—the"—Belinda's voice sank into a grating hollowness—"the legal father of my unborn infant. And calculating upon this result, I felt the necessity, for all our sakes, of avoiding to expose him, to humiliate myself, and to sow discord between Eliza Hartley and her earliest friend. For even you, Eliza, ought not to have been made capable of recognizing, in the husband of Belinda St. John, the man who, to your smiles, sacrificed—no matter for how short an interval of forgetfulness, *her* smiles and her sole earthly views of felicity; or, supposing you put in possession of the fact, and supposing him returned to his feelings for me, it would thence-

forward be impossible that you and I could ever meet, even as common acquaintances. No; pride and prudence equally ensured my silence at the time you speak of; and I went to the utmost limit of the lengths I should have gone, in vaguely alluding to my recent disappointments, and in repeatedly warning you to remain faithful to the first inclinations of your heart. And now, Eliza, I must in turn say, that if you had but profited by my warning, then indeed much had been spared to us both; much to your father, and much to the most deserving person whom—before your meeting with the murderer of my mother and my baby—you indirectly led to reckon upon your favour, and with whom you, my friend, may yet be happy; while for me there is not a hope on earth but—first—quick and fierce revenge—and then the repose of the long sleep.”

In these last words there was much to startle Eliza from her hitherto single and entire reliance upon all Belinda's assertions. The notion of regarding Talbot in a favourable light had never possessed her, even while she irresistibly yielded full credit to her gloomy visitor, and although could she have paused to reason, conclusions of his honesty and worthiness ought

to have gone hand-in-hand with that trusting state of mind. Now it suddenly occurred as strange and questionable that Belinda should so positively become his advocate; and the rapid doubt soon assumed a more distinct shape—“What! could he and Belinda be in league together? he, to secure his views on Eliza—she yet to secure the homage of Sir William Judkin?—could the excited passions of both have led them to combine in a story of Sir William’s baseness, which, if credited by her, might, assisted by those favourable representations of Talbot, ensure their common hopes?” And again, while Eliza struck her hands together at the returning prospect, again came the blessed thought that Sir William was guiltless of the hideous crimes charged upon him—guiltless of all but a transfer of his love from a woman whose vehement and wild character, when once known, it seemed but natural he should dislike. Her father’s death, too! Could Eliza credit the wild tale of its having been prevented? And he came not!—night deepened, and he came not. If free to visit her, as was pretended, would her anxious parent dally so long? Then what indeed was Sir William’s present fate? here appeared a discrepancy in Belinda’s aroused

feelings towards him, compared with some of her former assertions.

“ You told me, Belinda,” said Eliza, suddenly looking up, and fixing her visitor’s glance, —“ you told me, upon the night I accompanied you to meet my father, that you returned into Enniscorthy to free Sir William also from prison?”

“ Yes; and I did free him.”

“ Why? if your only present views towards him are those of vengeance, why need you—why should you have done so? He was in the hands of those who, upon your evidence, well supported, would have punished him as he merited.”

“ I know not what means your changed manner, Eliza; but is it necessary that I should answer you?—that I should repeat the nature of the oath I swore, anew, with my dying mother, over the disfigured corse of my child? Talbot thought as you think, and urged me to leave him to the laws of the land; but while I seemed to comply, I snatched him from their probable sentence to dispose him for my own doom and punishment. At the moment of his deliverance, he again sought to become my murderer, and breaking from me, and from the

lure which I hoped would keep him by my side, at least for a short distance, avoided the hands which lay in wait to compel him to my will."

"Have you seen him since, Belinda?"

"I have, and at the moment he was about to perpetrate another murder, which you would have lived to weep for; and a second time I hoped to make him my manacled captive, and a second time he escaped me."

"Belinda, all this may be true;—hear me! nor be surprised at the first show of a vehemence akin to your own. You say that your friend has saved my father; but if so, was it not from a fate which he first took the basest or the most unaccountable measures to ensure? Had Talbot permitted the witnesses to appear upon my father's trial—"

"The witnesses!" interrupted Belinda, scoffingly; "if upon that day an angel had come down to arraign the perjury brought against your father, his judges might have been moved; but no other testimony would have moved them, and this Talbot knew, as indeed any one of observation must have known; so that while his refusal to admit Sir Thomas's servants had no influence upon the result of the trial the ostentatious zeal in which he repulsed

them had much influence in inducing the order which left the execution of his revered friend in his own hands."

"He knew that Nale was a perjurer—knew it from the man himself—why not step forward and declare so?"

"Spare me, Eliza Hartley, spare an unhappy woman doomed to ignominy and wretchedness in every connexion of life, yet I will still answer you. In not attempting this, Talbot was governed by more than one motive. When he learned, secretly as it had been arranged, that you were indeed to become the nominal wife of the blackest-hearted man that ever wore a beautiful form, your old friend could only meet the exigency, by acting on Nale's depositions and Whaley's warrant; afterwards, it appeared but a chance that his accusation of my miserable parent would be effective, and in that case, Talbot himself becoming an object of suspicion, your father was really lost to you; and, Eliza, respect Talbot for an additional motive—do so, that is, if you have any feeling left for Belinda—he was willing to screen, at my kneeling request, the degraded being to whom I owe my accursed existence."

Eliza, evincing the natural tenacity with

which, while there is a doubt to substitute a reason, the heart will cling to its long indulged prepossessions in favour of an esteemed object, still remained wavering, and the black brow of Belinda St. John told that she read her thoughts in her manner.

"Sir William yet lives?" asked Eliza, spiritedly and expressively.

"He does—but neither for you nor for me."

"Saved, then, from his perilous situation in the streets of Ross?"

"Ay, carefully saved."

"Thank God!" Eliza briskly arose.

"Hah! and you indeed doubt the truth of anything I have told you?"

"I do!" answered Eliza, carried away by her sudden energy, never before assumed in Belinda's presence—"I do!—and nothing but his own admissions, or a repetition of your charges to his face, and his tacit acquiescence under them, shall make me discard my doubt."

"Come, then!" cried Belinda, exhibiting to excess the impetuosity that in her father's house had terrified Eliza,—“Come then, and you shall have the proof you demand. I did not intend to expose you to a scene that must harrow your weak nature, perhaps kill you—a

scene, that I alone, of all woman-kind, have nerve—because I have cause, to encounter. But I see that to vindicate myself, and ensure your future quiet—if, as I premised, you survive it—it is now necessary you should listen, ay, and look on. Follow me,—dare you follow?”

“Whither would you lead me?” demanded Eliza, impressively but resolutely.

“Into the presence of William Judkin.”

“Swear to that!”

“I swear it by Him who is to judge me for all I shall do, by all that has been done upon me!”

“Lead the way, then!” and in something like her own frenzy of manner, Eliza trod in the quick steps of Belinda.

CHAPTER XI.

A PERSON startled out of sleep, will suddenly rush to grapple, as it were, with the uncomprehended sound that has scared away his slumbers, his limbs and body vehemently active, while his mind is yet incapable of watching their motions. There are perfectly waking moments, too, though not often encountered in life, when, urged by overpowering excitement, we yield to an undefined, wild impulse, as little understood and unweighed as that of the half-aroused sleeper, and hurry to grasp at some vague object, with all the ardour of unreasoning desire. And under such an impetus, Eliza followed what, if she had reasoned, ought to have appeared to her, the very doubtful guidance of Belinda St. John. Prompt as was her action, she could not, indeed, have accounted

satisfactorily for it. Her continued doubts did not really arise from close consideration of the case before her;—in fact, she wished to doubt, rather than doubted; and perhaps, were her heart analyzed at the instant, a desperate resolution to attain the certainty which must go near to destroy her, and not a buoyant hope of any contrary demonstration, inspired her, as she hastened to see realised her conductor's promise of an immediate interview with Sir William Judkin.

They descended to the hall.

“This lady returns shortly,” said Belinda, in a commanding tone to Mistress Nelly and Robert, who, notwithstanding their continued civilities, seemed disposed to refuse egress: but to this brief explanation, if so it might be called, they only bowed and curtsied anew, and allowed both the ladies to pass out instantly.

Eliza and Belinda gained the avenue, side by side, walking quickly over the dancing patches of white light which the moon shed through the interstices of the trees and of their foliage. They passed the outward gate, and Belinda seemed to pace towards the ruins of Dunbrody Abbey, which, on its gentle elevation, not far

distant, was partly silvered by the unclouded luminary, partly wrapped in impenetrable shadow, while a vivid inversion of the whole effect appeared in the broad, smooth water beneath.

Suddenly, a chilling fancy seized upon Eliza. The mysterious view of the ruin, the scenery of its crumbled walls and nameless graves, became connected with Belinda's wild and dark character, and with the thought of probable injury intended to herself. She had before now suspected her wretched companion to be of unsound mind; nay, allowing her claims to sanity, Eliza did not distinctly infer from their late conversation, that Belinda, all her uncurbed passions and vehemence brought into account, might mean her well; and just in such a place, and at such an hour, either madness or hatred might easily and fitly indulge a fearful paroxysm. Arrested by these imaginations, she abruptly stood still.

"Do you falter in your resolution?" questioned Belinda, at her side, after having for a moment attentively regarded her.

"Whither, indeed, would you guide me?" Eliza betrayed the alarm she felt.

"To yonder ruins."

“ Why?—Did you not say we were to meet Sir William Judkin?”

“ And there you are to meet him.”

“ In that frightful place?”

“ Yes—it is the fittest for the interview.”

“ I will not go with you: I will rather return to the house I have left, and under its roof await my doom as best I may.”

“ It is not now a matter of choice with you, your accompanying me, or your turning back; after what has occurred, your childish, petty terrors are not to be considered: you must come with me, Eliza.”

“ Must! My God! for what purpose?”

“ For your own—for the indulgence of a wish you have yourself expressed:—hasten, the time presses.”

“ You would not force me, Belinda?”

“ I *would* not; yet *must*, if 'tis necessary: as I have said, I did not intend to expose you to the scene you are doomed to witness; but you defied and dared me, and now I *will* compel you to observe it;—nay, long, long ago, I cautioned you against all the consequences of your indulging a wayward fancy; but you laughed at my counsel, and braved them all,

like a self-willed girl,—face one of them now like a woman.”

“Pity me, Belinda—allow me to return to the house!”

“Pity?—what is pity? I, at least, never found out the quality in my kind, and therefore could not acquire it for myself: at all events, ’tis a weakly feeling, unsuited to the necessities of this occasion. Come! we are to be avenged together! you shall see, or partly see, the striking of the blow. I will seat you on a grave, and you and the viewless dead, if such there be, must answer to God and man that Belinda kept her oath; onward and judge for yourself!” and she put her arm through Eliza’s.

“Help! help!” screamed Eliza, breaking from her, and flying precipitately. But Belinda pursued, and soon seized her hand.

“Do not thwart me!” she cried in a deep startling tone; “hitherto, I have dealt magnanimously by you; your insidious blandishments seduced from me, and made a villain of the man who was god-like when I first met him, and my worshipper, as I was his: to you I owe it that he, for whose lightest pleasure I would have poured out my heart’s-

blood, raised his hand against my life, and killed my baby, while it quickened beneath my bosom;—to you I owe it that, to-night, I am motherless, childless, friendless, houseless—my cheeks withered and hollow, and my heart a rock;—to you I owe all this, and more than this; and yet, to the present hour, I have respected our school-girl friendship; to the present hour I have curbed the jealous rage that often boiled to strike you to my feet;—with every cause that woman can have for detestation, I have shown myself your friend: but vex me no farther, I warn you; in the present hour of trial, cross me not; else I may forget our young and innocent days—forget that you are Eliza Hartley!”

“If you mean me kindly,” said Eliza, imploringly, “of what use can my presence be, in the coming depths of night, in yonder dreadful place?”

“If I mean you kindly? Do you still doubt me? See—if I wished to do you evil, I could do it where we stand—see—I am prepared for all deadly purposes;” the moon’s beam glittered on a blade which she snatched from her bosom; “but no,” she put it up, in a calmer mood, or at least while she spoke

in a calmer accent; "this steel is differently destined—onward, therefore, and fear not."

She now flung her bony arm, which desperation seemed to have nerved to masculine strength, around Eliza's shrinking form, and hurried her along.

Eliza really feared to give farther opposition; her guide had threatened her in not very doubtful words; and so, shuddering and almost fainting, she allowed Belinda to direct, almost to originate her motion. The avenue of Talbot's house entered upon the high road, and along this they for some distance held their course. Then they came to a rude bridge constructed over one of those deep and abrupt hollows, locally called *pils*, up which, at high-water, the tide flows in-land, in a body so considerable as to float boats of burden, while at the sea's ebb, its loamy banks inclose but a shallow rill. They crossed the insecure bridge, and after some continued progress, gained the green ascent upon which stood the lonely and extensive ruins of Dunbrody.

Since their last conversation, to this point, no word was spoken, and still both remained silent. Eliza observed that Belinda did not, as she had

expected she would have done, strike upward, so as directly to approach the decayed monastery, but obliquely and partially ascended the little elevation, keeping rather near to the water. After some rapid walking, she stopped suddenly, and gazed around her, muttering, "Not here ! 'tis not quite the hour yet;" and again she strode forward.

While they had stood still, Eliza sent around a look of timid inquiry. To her left, and higher up, were the masses of ruins ; a mitred square castle in their centre, white in the moonshine, which also streamed here and there beneath the pointed arches of the roofless aisles ; and the broad shade, that at a greater distance presented only blanks of unbroken darkness, now allowed the eye to catch through it, indistinct, projecting forms, or blind recesses, or shapes still more vague, which sometimes seemed to move and wave beneath her unsteady glance, as if the spirits of the ancient masters of the pile were lurking within the shadowed fragments of its walls. But it was not in expectation of supernatural visitants that Eliza peered into the mysteries of the old building ; and of such as she did expect to see, none met her eye.

She looked forth upon the prospect to her

right-hand. The moon was reflected in the still sheet of water beneath the height, and gentle swells, silvered and sparkling, came at intervals to break, scarce with a sound, at its feet. At one bank, a wooded height very distant, rose above the river; at the other, and much nearer to her, swept down a point of land, round which the waters curved. Still no human figure met her view. The soft murmur of the approaching tide was soothing, not terrific; and the whole scene was as beautiful as lonely.

But her conductor hurried her on to a spot even more lonely.

At the usual full tide, the eminence of Dunbrody was almost encompassed by water. In one direction round its base, the pil, before-mentioned, became the channel of the intruding element; in another, a stretch of flat land lay under inundation. When the tide ebbed, this last was a swamp, across which, in former times, the industrious monks of the monastery had constructed a causeway, though few traces of the work appear to have triumphed over the undermining floods of many generations. But the high Gothic archway, to which it led, in an outward wall of the building, yet exists; and contiguous to this relique, remote from the main

pile, and overlooking the swamp, stood, upon the night of Eliza Hartley's visit to the spot, a little solitary ruin, not more than eight paces in length, and half the number in breadth. Rudely fashioned swellings of the turf, each the tenement of the humble dead of the district, crowded all around it. And humble, indeed, must have been the sleepers beneath ; for no " storied urn," or graceful monument arose to record their former state, and to mock their unconscious ashes ; not even a rudely-chiselled stone bore their names. The sole mementos that appeared were time-bleached fragments, taken from the adjacent ruin, and placed at the head of some little mounds, that, by their recollected peculiarity of shape, the relations of the last-buried might know whither to convey a new comer, to mingle his dust with the kindred dust below. Nay, even these rude remembrances were very few ; and the numerous and carelessly-formed graves crowded together in undulating and mingling confusion.

Within the crumbled walls that stood in the midst of this heap of dead, the tripping foot kicked up, at every step, from amongst the fallen stones, a human relic—so closely had they been piled over each other. The noisome hemlock, the

prickly nettle, and the other tall and rank weeds that thrive on the cemetery's fat soil, mingled with the long grass that also flourishes in its nourishment. Two old ash-trees near at hand, and some chance-sown black-thorns, shaded this favourite place of sepulture; and alder trees, believed by the Irish peasantry to be descendants of that upon which the traitor, Judas Iscariot, hanged himself in despair, gained, within and without, a luxuriant growth, and farther darkened the solitary spot with their loathsome-smelling foliage. One of them, indeed, once rooted in the end wall farthest from the entrance, grew in time to such an unwieldy bulk, as to fall across the space enclosed by the little ruin, dragging along with it the stones between which it had insidiously wrought its fibres; and there still lay the trunk of the spoliator, amid the rubbish it had made. All around the remaining portions of the interior, bushes and creeping brambles ran wild; and the ruin-loving ivy, that almost seems designed to exhibit the ever-green of inferior nature in contrast with the decay of man's idle works, and even with that of his perishable body, came from the outside over the top of the unroofed walls, hanging in gay festoons

above the mingled relics of human labour and of human being.

Stumbling amid the various inequalities of the ground, Belinda St. John and Eliza Hartley entered this little silent place of death and desolation. Often would Eliza have shrunk back, but her stern guide still controlled her motions.

“ Sit down there,” said Belinda,—“ you tremble and need rest ;” and she pointed to the fallen trunk of the alder-tree.

“ Why force me to this frightful spot ?” inquired Eliza.

Belinda stood in the centre of the ruin, the moon shone upon her emaciated and ashy face, glistened over the coal-black hair that hung thickly adown her hollow cheeks, and touched with dimmed radiance the folds of her funeral dress ; and thus standing, elevated to her full height, she seemed a figure fitly situated amidst the wreck around her.

“ I have brought—forced you here,” she answered, “ that you may have your request, and that I may keep my promise ; for here—ay, in this very churchyard,—you are to meet him who has played traitor to us both, and whom you will hear admit as much before the moon goes down.”

She stepped aside as she uttered these words; the ray of moonlight she had intercepted flowed forward and fell in a white shower into the far corner of the ruin. She started, fixed her eyes upon it, pointed impressively to it, and resumed.

“Look there; that is supernatural! It lights up the very spot where rest two of his victims—my broken-hearted mother and my little murdered innocent. Upon a dark night, my father paddled a small boat along the river below, and for cargo he had two corpses in their coffins. Hither he bore them, and rooted among the stones to make them the only grave the place would allow. Some days after, as I am told, a few children playing amongst the graves, saw the end of a new coffin that had been but partially covered with the rubbish, and they ran away in terror. But it was even my request that the coffins should not be hidden deep. I anticipated this night, when I might be able to point out the names on the lids. And now I will prepare for his coming;” and proceeding to the corner she stooped down, catching the moonlight upon her back, as she hastily tumbled away the stones.

“Belinda,” said Eliza, addressing her in

feeble accents, while thus occupied,—“ Belinda, you have solemnly promised more than once, that this night I should embrace my dear, dear father.”

“ And I promise it again. Had you treated all my promises and assertions so as to permit of my leaving you in the house, perhaps by this time you had been in his arms; now it is not unlikely that he will come to seek you here—but, hark !”

A loud shout from abroad broke the calm silence of the night; Belinda sprung up, strode to the narrow entrance, and clapping her hands together, gave an answering scream. The daws startled in the neighbouring ruin were heard clamorously croaking their alarm at the unusual and piercing sound; and as it echoed along the water, the stalking heron of the swamp responded in a harsh cry. Belinda hastily returned into the little building.

“ ’Tis he !” she whispered.

“ Who? my father?”

“ No, but the man you first wished to meet. They bear him hither.”

She pointed her finger at the shivering Eliza, and slowly moving it up and down, continued to address her.

“And now attend—listen with all your soul before you interrupt us.”

Steps and voices were heard approaching—they came nearer, Belinda drew back into the shade, and two men entered, bearing the seemingly lifeless body of a third person.

“Lay him there,” said Belinda, speaking from her concealment, as she motioned towards the corner in which she had lately been occupied.

“He’s upon the hand-gallop for a strange country, goin’ to lave Ireland for a while;” said Bill Nale, as he and Shawn-a-Gow rudely flung down the body into the nook, where it lay partially in the moonshine.

“Dying, you mean?” eagerly questioned Belinda of her wretched father, while she pressed forward,—“why is this?”

“None of our fault; the wounds he got in the battle done his business: hurry wid him, or he won’t wait for you.”

“Leave us together,” said Belinda, and her ruffian parent moved to quit the ruin.

The moment they had begun to speak, Shawn-a-Gow abruptly addressed Eliza by name, and thrusting a crumpled paper into her hand, while his eyes glared watchfully towards Nale, said,

"The moonlight is sthrong enough, Miss Hartley, to let you run an eye over id, jest to tell me what it manes—I can't make out pin-writin' myself, bud I know my own name when it's put down on paper, an' I think I saw id there: hurry, Miss—I wouldn't ax you, only there's life an' death in the business."

Thus appealed to, Eliza, notwithstanding the imminent interest of her own situation, read sufficient to allow her to answer—"Yes, your name is written here; and it seems a letter from some one who expected to find pikes at your house—take it—" turning away her head, and once more fixing her eyes on the corner, where the wounded man still lay motionless, while Belinda and her father continued their short dialogue.

"Look at the name at the bottom iv id," resumed Shawn, in a deep whisper—"isn't id the name o' Whaley?"—

"Yes—leave me."

"An' isn't this name on the cover, William Nale, Miss?"

"It is, it is—pray disturb me no farther."

"I guessed as much," said the smith, talking to himself. Nale now made way out of the ruin, and he strode after him.

"There, Shawn," said his companion, when they had cleared the heap of graves abroad and descending towards the wooden bridge that crossed the *pil*—"there, he's brought to his long reckonin' at last."

"So he is," replied Shawn, "an' so it happens wid all decavers like him, sooner or later—don't you think so, Bill?"

"Yes, to be sure, Jack: what the duoul ails him?" he added in a mutter, as he increased his speed down the eminence.

"Stop!" cried Shawn, seizing him by the shoulder, and standing still himself, he held Nale at arms length with one hand.

"Are you takin' lave o' your senses, Jack Delouchery? don't you know this is no place for stoppin' when we have to—"

"Don't spake either, only to what I'll ax you," interrupted his captor; "I found this afther you, on the road, this evenin'—what is id?"

"What is id?—why a letther, to be sure." Nale knew that the smith could not decypher writing, and he therefore deemed himself not in much danger.

"I see it's a letther—who wrote id?"

"Who wrote id?—my poor crature iv a

daughther Jack—she wrote id, an' on the head o' this very business, too."

"That's a lie!" thundered the Gow, grasping him round the neck with both hands. Nale instantly lost the power of uttering a sound. Almost instinctively he groped in his bosom.

"It won't do!" again roared Shawn, detecting this movement; and then he took away one of his hands from the ruffian's throat, and made himself master of the pistol for which Nale had been searching.

"I'll build up your house for you," gasped the half-choaked Nale, in this momentary respite, "I'll—"

"An' you daare to be spakin'!" once more interrupted his executioner, as he dashed him against the ground; and instantly Shawn's knee was on his breast, his left-hand still grasping his neck, and his right presenting the pistol. The smith had pressed the muzzle to Nale's forehead, and his finger vibrated on the trigger; he checked himself, and withdrew the finger out of the guard.

"No, you're not desarvin' o' the shot"—he muttered, turning the weapon in his hand—"this way 'ill pay you betther:" he raised the pistol, intending to strike Nale on the head with

its heavy butt ; again, however, he controlled himself, and hurling it far into the water beneath—" what am I dhramin' about ?" he resumed, " it ought to be done no way bud this : " and raising the knee which had already crushed Nale's breast-bone, while he continued to kneel on the other, Shawn dragged up his writhing victim, and placing the back of his neck upon the tightened joint, a second time used both his hands.

" Tom, my boy, can you see us ? " were the last words John Delouchery uttered over the object of his vengeance, while his savage eyes watched the upturned face. In the morning, Nale's crippled corse was found, not far from the *pil*. The smith might easily have hurled it into the deep gully which, about the time he had completed his act, was filled by the tide ; but it seemed that he scorned to take any measures to hide what he had done.

We return to the ruin.

For about the space of time occupied by this scene, Belinda had remained stationary and silent over Sir William Judkin, and Eliza, not yet assured that it was the Baronet, sat terrified and trembling on the trunk of the alder-tree.

Belinda's voice, sounding as if she muttered to herself, at length reached our heroine's ear.

"Yes,—I had him brought here to kill him, but not as he now lies at my feet ; not wounded, fainting, and already half-dead ; I expected to see him struggle against my uplifted hand, and he cannot even speak a word to avert the blow."

Her hollow accents, however, seemed to have recalled Sir William to some sense of his situation, for he stirred slightly, and in a feeble, broken tone, said—

"Where am I ? into what savage hands have I fallen ? Is there no kind fellow-creature within call ?"

Eliza knew his voice at once, changed as it was, and forgetting every thing in a sudden swell of pity, started up with clasped hands, and was rushing to his side.

"Back on your peril !" cried Belinda, seizing her arm, and almost swinging her back—"yet, no ; take his hand, if you can—'twill recall my resolution," she muttered, "take his hand, Eliza Hartley."

"Eliza Hartley !" screamed the dying man, "where is she ?"

"I am close by you, William," answered Eliza.

“And do I touch your innocent hand? do I look upon your radiant face?”

A deep “hah!” escaped Belinda.

“How came we into this place, Eliza? is not it amongst the dead they have flung my shattered body? I think my head rests on a coffin—yes, and here I am brought to die—already I feel the pang at my heart:—Eliza, hearken to me—you have escaped a wretch—at least—” he continued, his mind wavering—“at least I thought so, though lately she appeared before me, but I admit it must have been my fancy—for her head was cleft, ay, and the deep water rolled over her,” Eliza dropped his hand—“ah! now I am left alone, now you forsake me, Eliza, but had I lived, you would have proved my saving angel. For your gentle endearments I would have learned to love goodness. Belinda made me what I am—her fiery passion, her evil nature could neither reclaim nor attach me—”

“Rise, Eliza Hartley, or share his fate!” cried Belinda, stepping into the moon’s ray, so that it fully illuminated her features.

Sir William ceased speaking, his eye glazed, yet fixed itself on hers, he strove to rise upon his elbow while they regarded each other, but

the attempt failed, only causing a cry of agony.

"Yes," said Belinda, "you are among the graves; yes, your head rests upon a coffin."

"And you!" he said; "you rise from the bottom of the deep river to meet me here!"

"No; I escaped your hand. I live to meet you here."

"Then," he gasped, "wretch as I am! I will thank a merciful God for that!—I am not in reality a murderer!"

"You are, although Belinda St. John lives. Remember your brother assassin, Brown."

He uttered a piercing cry.

"And turn, if you can, one look upon the little coffin that supports your head; your murderous blows killed its inmate, ere yet the babe saw the light of day."

He endeavoured to obey the command, and it seemed as if he vaguely comprehended the name on the lid; for after gazing some time upon it, he attempted to join his hands and raise his eyes, as if he would pray; then sinking under the effort, his chest and face came with a heavy sound against the coffin, and his spread arms hung at its sides.

"And now you begin to know why you are

brought here," continued Belinda; "I swore over that infant's corse, hand-in-hand with my gasping mother, who stretches by its side, to kill you where you lie—see!" She drew out the long blade that Eliza had before seen in her hand.

"Hold, Belinda! do not make yourself a murderess!" shrieked Eliza, flinging herself once more by Sir William.

"Touch him not, siren!—brave me not! Rise up and hearken to me! you and he together!"

"Ah!" Eliza shrieked again, "he cannot hearken to more!—He is dead!—dead since he fell upon the coffin!"

"Dead?" repeated Belinda,—“dead, you say?” She knelt, put back his hair, and looked into his rigid features. “And so he is; dead, and as lowly laid as his poor victims. He was a bad and wretched man, Eliza, but beautiful as Lucifer. I am glad it happens thus. Had he come before me in all his vigorous strength, I think I could have kept my oath; but from the moment I saw his crushed and wounded body, and heard his low wailing voice, revenge left my heart; and when you cried out just now, I did not draw the steel to strike it through him, Eliza, but only that he might see proof of my former purpose. Well, he is gone—he,

whom we both loved; and he has left one of us destroyed and avenged, and the other saved and warned. God be more merciful to him than we were to each other! He now stands for judgment, with you, my little baby, as his accuser." Belinda went on, laying one hand on the infant's coffin, while the other passed round the neck of the corse: "But do not, do not plead loudly against your wretched father! Even for my sake, my babe, kneel at his feet, and hold up your angel hands for him to the Great Judge. I think he has bribed your advocacy, after all;—Eliza, did he not seem to die praying over the relics of his child? and when his arms fell helplessly down, perhaps"—Belinda's voice broke and trembled—"perhaps he would have embraced the innocent clay. Nay, what is this? The night-dew, or his tears, upon the lid? Oh God! oh God! and did he weep for us at last, my infant?" The unhappy woman found way for her own tears—the first shed since her idol had forsaken her; and pressing tightly the arm that encircled the dead man's neck, she flung the other round the coffin, and fell convulsed upon it.

Eliza's anguish was also excessive, when it became checked by some one pronouncing her

name outside the ruin. She sprang up, a man entered the little doorway, and she sank into her father's arms.

Recovering from the swoon that succeeded to her long struggling with terror, at last ended in joy, she found herself still supported by her father at the bottom of the eminence of Dunbrody.

"Yes, yes!—now I am not left in doubt!" she cried, gazing into his features—"and you are safe from future danger, my dearest father."

"Safe, as my letter promised you."

"And Talbot, then——"

"Is our common deliverer."

Eliza glanced around. Her father, understanding her look, resumed—

"But he presumes nothing upon his services, and therefore I came to seek him alone."

The good-feeling shown by Talbot, in this instance, appealed to Eliza as much as did the sense of his extraordinary conduct.

"The wretched Belinda St. John!" she resumed, pointing towards the little ruin.

"An aged clergyman, a relation of her unhappy mother, whom we interested on her account, followed me to that horrible place and

is now at her side ; be tranquil, my Eliza, she shall be taken care of ;—here comes my servant to attend you to the carriage.”

THE storm of the insurrection blew away, but not so its effects. The people saw their error, and politicians hastened to grasp the advantages which that error placed under their hands. Blood continued to be shed some time after the total discomfiture of the peasant-force, but at last its flow was allowed to cease, and in the pause of terror, and with a face of conciliation, and a promise of advantages which have not yet been conceded, the Legislative Union,—that measure for which disaffection had been permitted to break out into actual disloyalty, nay, had often been goaded to the field,—the Legislative Union between England and Ireland, was accomplished.

About the same time we have to record another union, which proved happier than the national one. In the year 1800, Eliza Hartley became the bride of Henry Talbot, and not till then could she tutor her heart to return to her early affection for her first lover. But even at twenty years of age she was better qualified

than at eighteen she had been to discriminate between a passion founded on little else than the personal attractions of its object, and a more sincere tenderness, bestowed as the reward of gentle virtues, manly honour and courage, and, after all, a face and figure only second to the unfortunate Baronet's standard of beauty.

Of Belinda, from the night of Sir William's death, her old schoolfellow never heard. It was only known, or rather suspected, that the aged clergyman immediately conveyed her to a foreign country, where perhaps, in the seclusion of a convent, she learned to triumph at once over her passions and her sorrows. The mystery of her fate became impenetrable, from the circumstance of the sudden death of her old protector on the Continent, during, as was conjectured, his return, alone, to his own country.

Shawn-a-Gow fell in one of the unsuccessful battles afterwards fought by the insurgents.

His daughter Kitty and Timothy Reily became joint proprietors of a snug farm-house on the estate of Harry Talbot ; and under its roof both sought to give quiet and peace to the poor maniac mother, who had witnessed the horrid death of her darling son.

As for Nanny the Knitter, she lived long to recount to wondering ears her adventures under the lime-tree and in the chest, and to knit dozens of pairs of little stockings for five or six pairs of little feet appertaining to the persons of as many curly-headed prattlers, all bearing the name of Talbot. Moreover, the population of her county had been thinned during the insurrection, and a consequent necessity arising for repairing the want, Nanny became very brisk, during many subsequent years, in the service of Hymen.

Father Rourke was hanged upon the bridge of Wexford; the weight of his colossal body having broken the rope, however, before Saunders Smily saw him pending to his heart's content.

THE END.

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